

Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

August 15 to August 22, 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

New law to boost affordable housing funds through local tax-incentive extensions

Wisconsin 2025 Act 173, approved by the Legislature in April and taking effect in 2028, doubles the allowable extension period for tax increment districts, letting municipalities including Janesville extend a TID's life by two years after project costs are retired and direct captured revenue into an affordable housing fund. Under current law Janesville extended and closed five TIF districts between 2021 and 2026, generating a cumulative affordable housing fund balance of \$3.3 million, of which 75 percent is allocated to affordable housing and 25 percent to housing broadly. The act is part of a housing package that also modifies WHEDA loan programs and establishes a new residential TIF category. City officials have identified TID 32, projected to close in 2028, as a candidate for the new two-year extension. The Janesville City Council updated its affordable housing fund policy in July 2026 to broaden access for nonprofit developers including Habitat for Humanity. A council vote would be required to approve any TID 32 extension upon staff recommendation.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/new-law-to-boost-affordable-housing-funds-through-local-tax-incentive-extensions/article_6662986c-26a2-4d41-8e96-5352a4dd532b.html

Rusk County property values rise 15 percent

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue's 2026 Statement of Changes in Equalized Values, released August 14, 2026, shows Rusk County's total equalized property value rose approximately \$346.5 million, or 15 percent, from about \$2.254 billion in 2025 to about \$2.600 billion in 2026. Rusk County ranked third statewide for percentage growth, behind Buffalo County at 16.40 percent and Green Lake County at 15.37 percent, while statewide equalized value increased \$74.6 billion, or 8 percent, to \$1.057 trillion. Within Rusk County, the village of Ingram recorded the largest municipal percentage gain at 180 percent, rising from \$2.51 million to \$7.02 million, and the town of Big Bend recorded the largest dollar increase at approximately \$60.7 million. The city of Ladysmith posted the smallest increase at less than 1 percent, adding roughly \$433,900, though it recorded \$2,578,200 in net new construction, which creates additional levy capacity under Wisconsin's levy-limit statute. The town of Washington was the only municipality in the county to record a decrease.

Source: Ladysmith News (Western) | https://ladysmithnews.com/news/article_d8ec99a1-7513-41b2-925d-9c71d4eb34ff.html

Chippewa County pushes to allow counties to raise sales tax

The Chippewa County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution in June 2026 directing the Wisconsin Counties Association to lobby the Legislature to allow counties to levy an additional 0.5 percent sales tax dedicated to road and bridge maintenance, rehabilitation, and infrastructure. Under the proposal, counties would retain 50 percent of collected revenue and distribute the remaining 50 percent to towns, villages, and cities for road repairs. Current state law caps county sales taxes at 0.5 percent on top of the state's 5.0 percent rate. WCA Forward Analytics Director Kevin Dospoy noted that between 2010 and 2025 Chippewa County's property tax levy was permitted to grow approximately 31 percent under state levy limits while inflation rose nearly 50 percent over the same period. County Administrator Andy Albarado said Chippewa County would likely implement the tax only if neighboring counties broadly adopted it. The WCA is expected to vote on including the proposal in its legislative advocacy agenda at its annual meeting in September 2026.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/21/chippewa-county-pushes-allow-counties-raise-sales-tax/>

Superior council weighs assessment challenge and settlement

The Superior City Council voted August 18 to file a cross-appeal against Exodus Real Estate Holdings, which disputed a Wisconsin Department of Revenue manufacturing property assessment of more than \$16.5 million, arguing the firm is worth only \$13 million. City Assessor Colin Payton recommended the counter-appeal on the grounds that the burden of proof lies with the appellant, and that the current assessment is nearly triple Exodus' 2022 valuation and approximately \$1.8 million above its 2025 assessed value according to Douglas County tax records. Separately, Mayor Jim Paine announced the council expects to formally settle a Douglas County Circuit Court lawsuit filed by Walmart Real Estate Business Trust on September 1. Walmart had challenged its 2025 assessment of \$14 million, claiming the Tower Avenue store was worth roughly \$7.1 million. The council offered to reduce the assessed value by approximately \$1 million, and Walmart's attorneys notified the court on August 14 that the matter was settled.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegram.com/news/local/superior-council-weighs-assessment-challenge-and-settlement>

Baraboo-area taxpayers likely to see significant increase in fire and EMS costs

The Baraboo Area Fire and EMS District, which serves Baraboo, West Baraboo, and the towns of Baraboo, Fairfield, and Greenfield, is seeking municipal contribution increases to close a \$2.2 million structural deficit attributed to uncollected patient bills and municipal funding that has not kept pace with expenses and wage increases. The proposed EMS assessment would rise from \$477,607 to \$1.6 million, a 134 percent increase, while the fire protection assessment would increase 46 percent from \$705,127 to \$1.03 million. Baraboo's combined contribution would climb from \$412,340 to \$1,209,759, and a \$300,000 Baraboo home would carry an estimated \$611 in fire and EMS property taxes next year, up from roughly \$301 this year. Chief Caleb Johnson said eliminating the shortfall would likely take five years, and that service reductions, staffing impacts, or restructuring remain options if funding efforts fail. Mayor Rob Nelson said the city would likely take out a short-term loan in November, repaid in February after property tax receipts arrive, classified as debt to stay within state levy limits.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_d3b948e5-4ecb-4fa1-b14a-12567cba2fc6.html

Village of Pewaukee to review TID districts

The Village of Pewaukee Joint Review Board is scheduled to meet at 5 p.m. Monday to conduct its annual review of the village's three active tax increment districts, examining 2025 reports and audits for each. TID #2, created in 2014 to support downtown Pewaukee and Pewaukee Lake development, held a 2025 assessed value of \$23,740,600, an increment of \$15,437,800 over its base value of \$8,302,800. TID #3, created in 2021 and containing The Glen on Pewaukee Lake subdivision, reached a 2025 value of \$26,211,200 from a base of \$0. TID #4, created in 2022 and containing the Riverside Preserve subdivision, was valued at \$9,729,200 in 2025, an increase of \$8,995,500 over its \$733,700 base. All valuation figures are drawn from Wisconsin Department of Revenue data. The board will evaluate each district's 2025 performance at Monday's meeting.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/village-of-pewaukee-to-review-tid-districts/article_e5269758-e1cd-5ab1-b00c-b8c584f02a21.html

Committee seeks oversight of industrial sites

The Ladysmith City Council's Property Committee voted August 5, 2026, on a voice vote to recommend that the full City Council authorize the committee to oversee and manage the city's recently acquired industrial properties. City Administrator Alan Christianson, Jr., reported that insurance applications for the properties had been submitted. City Comptroller Tony Devine said monthly financial statements will be generated and distributed as part of the city's accounting process, and confirmed that the remaining balance owed to the Rusk County Animal Shelter had been paid to Rusk County the prior week. The committee identified the need to conduct a physical inventory of the properties and establish accounting practices to track associated revenues and expenses. Separately, the committee approved on a voice vote a recommendation to authorize Dave Roth to paint doors at the old fire hall for \$450, and took no action on a proposed forestry contract from Hillcrest Consulting Forestry LLC for timber sales on city property. The full City Council must next act on the oversight authorization recommendation.

Source: Ladysmith News (Western) | https://ladysmithnews.com/news/article_6849df59-0873-420d-b050-28399f2c3782.html

Workforce and Labor

'Leadership transitions require time': Beloit City Manager defends police chief amid staffing shortage

Beloit City Manager Daniel Ortiz Hernandez, who began in the role in June 2026, released a seven-page public statement on August 22 addressing a shortage of 19 patrol officers out of 74 sworn positions in the Beloit Police Department. Ortiz Hernandez defended Police Chief Schonella Stewart, who took over in December 2025, citing her one-on-one meetings with officers as an active retention measure. The city has approved overtime pay for officers picking up extra shifts and launched a retention initiative providing financial benefits to current officers. The Beloit City Council also recently approved a collaboration with the Rock County Sheriff's Office to have deputies cover patrol shifts temporarily while recruitment continues. Ortiz Hernandez additionally identified the Public Works Department as experiencing substantial employee departures, characterizing the situation as a citywide workforce and organizational capacity challenge requiring examination of compensation, technology, equipment, and resource allocation.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/22/leadership-transitions-require-time-beloit-city-manager-defends-police-chief-amid-staffing-shortage/>

Shambeau: Janesville City Council knew Rhode Island manager finalist was put on leave

The Janesville City Council's city manager search has advanced to a final interview phase scheduled for August 26, with two finalists remaining: Rebecca Houseman and Colin Kennedy. Kennedy, currently the city manager of Newport, Rhode Island, was placed on paid administrative leave by the Newport City Council on August 15, following an executive session vote that also declined to renew his contract. Kennedy has retained legal counsel and is reportedly threatening legal action against Newport, citing a hostile work environment. Janesville Interim City Manager Jay Shambeau, whose firm, Innovative Public Advisors, is facilitating the recruitment, confirmed that the Janesville City Council was aware of Kennedy's administrative leave status. The finalist pool was narrowed from 26 candidates to 2 before this stage. August 26 activities include a final council interview, department head interviews, a community stakeholder panel composed of representatives from SNOW Janesville, Forward Janesville, and county and state participants, and a city tour. The council holds final hiring authority.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/shambeau-janesville-city-council-knew-rhode-island-manager-finalist-was-put-on-leave/article_3867129e-2e95-4d0e-9e34-01ab5a988914.html

Fort's Rebecca Houseman a finalist for city manager position in Janesville

The City of Janesville has advanced two finalists in its city manager recruitment: Rebecca Houseman, who has served as Fort Atkinson City Manager since 2021, and Colin Kennedy, City Manager of Newport, Rhode Island. Houseman brings more than 20 years of local government experience, including prior leadership roles with the Village of Darien and the City of Beloit, and

would become Janesville's first female city manager if selected. Kennedy has served as Newport's city manager since 2024 and previously completed a 22-year career with the United States Navy; the Newport City Council voted August 15 to place him on paid administrative leave amid reported legal threats. Jay Shambeau has served as Janesville's interim manager since June, following Kevin Lahner's resignation in May. The next selection phase is scheduled for August 26 and will include a final Janesville City Council interview, meetings with department heads and division officers, a community stakeholder panel, and a city tour. The recruitment is facilitated by Innovative Public Advisors.

Source: Daily Jefferson County Union (South Central) | https://www.dailyunion.com/news/local/forts-rebecca-houseman-a-finalist-for-city-manager-position-in-janesville/article_cd27a8db-68a6-538b-bcb3-5a2c5e1ba705.html

3 candidates selected to interview for Chippewa Falls city administrator

The Chippewa Falls City Council unanimously approved funding a new city administrator position at its December 4, 2025, meeting, allocating \$200,000 for the role. The city has not had a city administrator since 2009. The mayor announced on August 20, 2026, that three candidates have been selected and have accepted in-person interview invitations: Rebeca Glewen, current County Administrator and Human Resource Director for Trempealeau County; Cassandra Hiller, Assistant City Manager for the City of Elgin, Illinois, as of July 20, 2026; and Dana Schoening, City Manager of Tuttle, Oklahoma. The article does not report an interview date or a timeline for a final hiring decision.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/20/3-candidates-selected-interview-chippewa-falls-city-administrator/>

Prescott City Council approves Public Works study

The Prescott City Council, at its August 10 meeting, approved two governance actions. It approved the 2026 Public Works Organizational Study, commissioned in response to the retirement of Public Works Director Mike Kinneman at the end of July and the August 11 start date of incoming Director Ryan Newland. City Administrator Matt Wolf said the study was developed through individual employee interviews conducted between December 15, 2025, and January 12, 2026, and that staff rated departmental performance an average of 8 out of 10. The city has budgeted \$142,051 for a three-stall garage expansion to address identified space limitations. The council also unanimously approved amendments to Chapter 635 of the City Code, Zoning, following a Planning Commission recommendation and an August 3 public hearing. Changes include removal of large-scale solar farms as a conditional use in the C1, I1, and I3 districts, removal of airports and railroad facilities from I2 conditional uses, and addition of accessory dwelling units as a conditional use in the R5 single-family residential district.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/prescott-city-council-approves-public-works-study,202733>

Milwaukee-area cop who quit job after sexting with victim still in policing

Christopher Cheek, a former Grafton Police Department officer earning \$97,000 annually, was forced to resign in May 2025 after an internal investigation found he exchanged sexually explicit messages and images with a victim in a pending domestic-violence criminal case, potentially compromising the prosecution, according to investigation documents obtained by The Badger

Project through a records request. Grafton determined termination was appropriate, but Cheek chose resignation instead. The Wisconsin Department of Justice database tracking negative law enforcement separations confirms Cheek was hired by the Trenton Police Department in Washington County in 2016 and continues working there part-time at \$32 per hour. Trenton Police Chief Andrew Mammen, who also heads the Dover Water Patrol in Racine County, hired Cheek at that agency in June 2025. Mammen characterized Cheek's conduct as a one-off lapse of judgement and said Cheek remained qualified for employment based on a background investigation. No further disciplinary or decertification proceedings were reported.

Source: The Badger Project (Southeastern) | <https://thebadgerproject.org/2026/08/17/milwaukee-area-cop-who-quit-after-sexting-with-victim-remains-in-law-enforcement/>

Portage County jail officer resigns after arrest for fight with brother

Todd Domres, a Portage County corrections officer with nearly four years of county service, resigned on July 31 following his arrest on suspicion of assaulting his brother during an off-duty altercation in late July. Domres, 46, now faces felony substantial battery and misdemeanor criminal damage to property charges. His annual salary at the time of resignation was approximately \$55,000. Prior to his resignation, Portage County Sheriff Mike Lukas placed Domres on non-disciplinary administrative leave pending investigation for off-duty conduct. The Stevens Point Police Department assumed investigative jurisdiction from the Portage County Sheriff's Office to avoid a conflict of interest, given Domres's employment at the county jail. Portage County Human Resources confirmed the July 31 resignation date. Domres's next court date is scheduled for September 8.

Source: The Badger Project (Central/Northern) | <https://thebadgerproject.org/2026/08/20/portage-county-jail-officer-resigns-after-arrest-for-fight-with-brother/>

Infrastructure and Utilities

Superior council takes first step to a referendum

The Superior City Council voted 8-2 on Tuesday, August 18, to publish a resolution in the newspaper initiating the process for a public referendum on whether the city should acquire Superior Water, Light & Power's water infrastructure and operate it as a municipally run utility. Councilors Sarah Anderson and Jack Sweeney voted in opposition; the eight in favor were Garner Moffat, Tylor Elm, Nicholas Ledin, Joe Radtke, Karly Caven, Mike Herrick, Robert Hering, and Lindsey Graskey. The published resolution is the required first procedural step under state law before the council can vote to place the question on the ballot; the earliest that vote can occur is September 1. If approved by referendum, the acquisition would next require a Douglas County Circuit Court determination of necessity, followed by a Public Service Commission determination of price. Mayor Jim Paine noted the council retains authority to withdraw at any point. IBEW Local 31 Business Manager Kristin Renskers testified that municipalization would split SWL&P employees' pensions between two partial pension systems.

Source: Superior Telegram (Western) | <https://www.superiortelegam.com/news/local/superior-council-takes-first-step-to-a-referendum>

City council OKs utility upgrades as water, sewer rate hikes loom

The Ladysmith Common Council voted Monday, August 10, to approve conversion of the city's water and wastewater SCADA system from internet-based to point-to-point radio communications, serving the water treatment plant, wastewater facility, water towers, and wells. The existing system is 13 to 14 years old and has generated reliability and cybersecurity concerns, including an incident in which an operator received 51 alarms over a single weekend due to internet problems. The project will be funded as a water and sewer utility expense rather than through the property tax levy, and Public Works Director Kurt Gorsegrner confirmed both a water and a sewer rate increase will be required. That rate case must go through the Public Service Commission and will require a public hearing, a process expected to take several months. The council also approved a \$31,888 change order for valve and manhole repairs and a \$12,000 contribution toward a \$34,900 library facility assessment. Filter media replacement at the water treatment plant, estimated at \$153,000, is expected to be included in the upcoming rate case.

Source: Ladysmith News (Western) | https://ladysmithnews.com/news/article_d7e597a2-9d37-44fb-a22a-5c6407608612.html

Wausau Water Works to temporarily reduce fluoride in water because of supply constraints

Wausau Water Works announced on August 17, 2026, a temporary reduction in fluoride levels added to the city's public water supply, citing nationwide supply chain disruptions affecting major domestic fluoride additive manufacturers. Scott Boers, water operations superintendent for Wausau Water Works, said the utility is pursuing alternate supply options while stretching current stock. The reduction affects the full Wausau public water system. Wausau joins Milwaukee and other Wisconsin cities facing the same shortage, which stems from reduced production and ingredient scarcity among major domestic manufacturers. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services acknowledges the reduction will temporarily lessen some dental health benefits while maintaining partial benefit. Residents do not need to take immediate action and are advised to continue fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinse use. Individuals with concerns may contact Wausau Water Works at 715-261-6530. The utility said it will provide updates as the supply situation evolves.

Source: Wausau Pilot & Review (Central/Northern) | <https://wausaupilotandreview.com/2026/08/17/wausau-water-works-to-temporarily-reduce-fluoride-in-water-because-of-supply-constraints/>

We Energies signs 20-year Point Beach nuclear power deal

We Energies disclosed in a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing that it has signed a new 20-year power purchase agreement with NextEra Energy to buy electricity from the Point Beach nuclear plant in Manitowoc County, Wisconsin's only active nuclear power plant. The proposed agreement would have We Energies purchase 86 percent of the plant's energy output and requires approval from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission before taking effect. The current contract, set to expire by 2033, carries annual price escalations exceeding 7 percent per megawatt hour, a cost structure that ratepayer advocates including the Citizens Utility Board have challenged for years. The PSC directed We Energies to review alternatives to the arrangement in 2019 as part of a broader rate case. Spokesman Brendan Conway said the new agreement will provide customers with fuel savings compared with the current agreement when it goes into

effect. CUB Executive Director Tom Content said his organization plans to review the proposal to assess the magnitude of customer savings. PSC approval is the next required procedural step.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/we-energies-signs-20-year-point-beach-nuclear-power-deal/>

Meetings scheduled on proposed transmission line

Midcontinent Grid Solutions is conducting public open houses in August 2026 across eight southern Wisconsin counties to gather input on route options for the BECI Project, a proposed 190-mile, 765-kilovolt transmission line estimated to cost \$1.2 billion. The line would run from Crawford County east through Richland, Sauk, and Columbia counties, then southeast through Dodge or Dane County, and south through Jefferson, Walworth, and Rock counties to the Illinois state line. The project is part of the Tranche 2.1 regional plan approved in 2024 by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, which oversees the electric grid in 15 states and the Canadian province of Manitoba. A final route has not been determined. Wisconsin Public Service Commission approval is projected for mid-2028, with construction beginning in late 2029. Open houses are scheduled through August 27 in Richland Center, Gays Mills, Baraboo, Poynette, Jefferson, Sun Prairie, Delavan, and Janesville.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_857b6d21-8731-507e-9ed0-2985d1600705.html

Morse Street miscommunication settled by Village Board

The Ellsworth Village Board convened a special meeting on Friday, August 14, to resolve a design miscommunication with Cedar Corporation, the project's engineering firm, over curb construction on Morse Street. The board had approved plans specifying regular curb, gutter, and sidewalk with two drive-over access points in front of a pole shed building housing Maple Street Repair, Brush Strokes, and Country Fit Nutrition; instead, Cedar Corporation installed drive-over curb along the full length of that stretch. Village President Becky Beissel noted the discrepancy also affected special assessments charged to the adjacent property owner, who received a higher assessment without prior notice. The board voted to approve a final design of a 10-foot curb with lighting and two vehicle entrances. Trustee Ryan Bench said Cedar Corporation should have communicated design changes to the board before implementation. Discussions over whether the village or Cedar Corporation bears financial responsibility for the corrective work will continue at a future meeting.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/morse-street-miscommunication-settled-by-village-board,202724>

Port grapples with 'crazy' data center traffic

Port Washington City Engineer Roger Strohm confirmed that temporary traffic signals have been installed over the Highways 32 and H intersection at the I-43 interchange and are expected to be operational by August 24 to address gridlock generated by construction of the Vantage Data Centers Lighthouse Campus. The 672-acre campus, which broke ground in December 2025 and is expected to be completed in 2028, currently draws a workforce of approximately 5,000 construction workers during peak summer shifts. Vantage is bearing all costs for the traffic lights, lane enhancements, and law enforcement traffic control, though Strohm did not disclose a total

dollar figure. Ozaukee County is separately widening ramps and intersection approaches, adding dedicated turn lanes, an enhanced pedestrian control signal, and wider turning radii at Highway KW and Highway LL. All road improvements are designated as temporary, and Vantage is contractually responsible for removing them upon project completion. The next procedural step is activation of the temporary signals, anticipated the week of August 24.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/port-grapples-%E2%80%98crazy%E2%80%99-data-center-traffic>

Milwaukee Street redesign in Madison aims to boost safety amid growth

Madison's Transportation Commission unanimously approved a redesign of Milwaukee Street between Starkweather Creek and West Corporate Drive at its August 2026 meeting, reclassifying the corridor from a community collector street to a community main street to accommodate anticipated mixed-use growth. The approved plan includes medians throughout the segment, a shared-use path on the north side from Walter Street to West Corporate Drive, a bike lane on the south side, several raised intersections, wider terrace spaces, north-side parking, and replacement of underground water and sewer infrastructure. South-side parking will be removed after a May 2025 city parking study found parked car volumes on the 3400 to 3600 blocks ranging from zero to two vehicles. New development in the 25-acre Voit Farms subdivision is projected to add roughly 5,500 daily trips, raising total traffic to more than 18,000 vehicles per day. Construction is expected to begin next spring and conclude in fall.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/milwaukee-street-redesign-in-madison-aims-to-boost-safety-amid-growth/article_77d48715-9a7f-4479-82f7-295e89089b64.html

Dane County axes Madison isthmus from Yahara River dredging plans

Dane County dropped the fifth and final phase of its Yahara River dredging project, the urban stretch between Lake Mendota and Lake Monona, after a city watershed study concluded sediment removal in that corridor would have little effect on flash flooding during major storms and would heavily disturb the historic Yahara River Parkway. The decision, made at the beginning of 2026, reduces the project's estimated cost from \$15 million to under \$10 million, according to John Reimer, assistant director of Dane County's Land & Water Resources Department. The four-phase, five-location project began in 2019 and has removed approximately 237,000 cubic yards of sediment to date using a \$650,000 dredging machine the county purchased in 2021. Teams are targeting completion of the first part of phase three, a channel between Lower Mud Lake and Lake Kegonsa, by the end of 2026. The final phase, targeting a stretch from Highway B to Stoughton, is not expected to begin before 2029.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/dane-county-axes-madison-isthmus-from-yahara-river-dredging-plans/article_98911055-165e-4850-a679-e23cf54b2930.html

Plan to cut taxi's night hours subject of hearing

The Ozaukee County Public Works Committee held a public hearing August 20 on a proposal to reduce late-night hours for the Ozaukee County Shared Ride Taxi and reallocate nine weekly service hours to higher-demand periods. Under the proposal, weekday service would end at 10 p.m. instead of 11:30 p.m., Saturday service at 9 p.m. instead of 10 p.m., and Sunday service at 5 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. The current contract with operator Go Riteway, which has run the service

since 2023, provides 58,800 annual billable hours at approximately \$2.17 million. Reallocation to peak hours would add roughly 100 hours per week and increase annual cost by approximately \$192,000, with about half funded from the county's \$2.3 million transit reserve fund and the remainder from state Department of Transportation and fare-box revenue. Transit Supt. Kerise Zutz noted that 40 unique riders accounted for 1,089 late-night trips over a six-month period. The committee was scheduled to vote immediately following the hearing, with an October 1 effective date if approved.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/plan-cut-taxi%E2%80%99s-night-hours-subject-hearing>

Worries about e-bikes spur call to revive trail council

Ozaukee County Supervisor Rob Holyoke urged the Natural Resources Committee to reconstitute the dormant Ozaukee Interurban Trail Advisory Council to address e-bike and e-scooter regulation on the 39-mile trail running between Milwaukee and Sheboygan counties. Existing county ordinances already ban motorized vehicles, including e-bikes, from the trail, but enforcement has proven difficult; Holyoke noted that other counties have adopted speed limits only to retract them due to enforcement challenges. The advisory council has not met in at least 10 years, according to former vice chairman Al Krier, who confirmed he resigned from the body in 2014. Two recent fatal e-bike accidents in Wisconsin, including one in Sheboygan that killed a 14-year-old in July, have intensified local pressure to act. Planning and Parks Director Andrew Struck and UW-Extension staffer Paul Roback committed to reconstituting the council, with Struck stating he has a roster of prospective public members identified. The City of Cedarburg has separately drafted an e-bike ordinance requiring compliance with state traffic laws, functional brakes, and nighttime lighting.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/worries-about-e-bikes-spur-call-revive-trail-council>

\$32M in federal funding allocated to Wisconsin counties to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities

Governor Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation announced \$32 million in federal funding distributed across 49 local transportation improvement projects statewide for Federal Fiscal Year 2026 through 2030, with four Western Wisconsin communities receiving allocations. The City of Prescott in Pierce County received the largest regional award at \$5.5 million to construct a trail and safe crossings along U.S. Highway 10 and state highways 29 and 35, serving three local schools in an area currently lacking pedestrian or bicycle crossings. The City of New Richmond in St. Croix County received nearly \$1.1 million for the first phase of an off-road trail along County Trunk Highway K connecting downtown to the city's eastern limits. The City of La Crosse received \$805,000 for the King Street Greenway extension from 3rd to 7th Street. Eau Claire County received \$713,000 to reconstruct the Altoona Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge, an early-1900s structure rated low and located on a regional trail system stretching from Cornell to Menomonie.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Statewide) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/21/32m-federal-funding-allocated-wisconsin-counties-improve-bicycle-pedestrian-facilities/>

Crandon in line to receive a \$1-million-dollar grant

The Wisconsin Department of Administration awarded the City of Crandon a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities grant for street and utilities infrastructure improvements, announced August 21, 2026. The award is part of a statewide distribution of \$19,785,530 to 20 communities under the CDBG Public Facilities program, administered through DOA Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld. Crandon is one of 19 communities receiving the maximum \$1 million allocation; the Village of Cameron received the smallest award at \$785,530. Eligible communities must have populations of 50,000 or fewer, and projects must benefit low- and moderate-income individuals. Governor Tony Evers noted that the Trump administration has proposed eliminating the program in the next federal budget and called on Congress to preserve funding. No local vote or project timeline for Crandon's specific infrastructure improvements was reported in the article.

Source: WXPB 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wxpr.org/politics-government/2026-08-21/crandon-in-line-to-receive-a-1-million-dollar-grant>

Gov. Evers visits Menomonie to highlight grant for upgrading city's water system

Governor Tony Evers visited Menomonie on August 20, 2026, to highlight a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant awarded to fund upgrades to the city's municipal water system. Evers used the visit to urge Wisconsin congressional members to oppose a proposal from President Donald Trump to eliminate the Community Development Block Grant program in an upcoming federal budget, saying elimination would be detrimental to rural infrastructure and housing. The visit occurred approximately one month after Menomonie experienced a municipal water crisis in which a boil water advisory was issued following pressure loss due to high demand. That advisory has since been lifted; however, a lawn watering ban remains in effect and has been extended through October 31, 2026. No vote or formal municipal action was reported at the visit. The next consequential step noted is congressional consideration of the federal budget proposal affecting the grant program.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/20/gov-evers-visits-menomonie-highlight-grant-upgrading-citys-water-system/>

City of Wausau to Submit Proposal to Purchase Vacated UW-Stevens Point at Wausau Campus

The Wausau Common Council approved a proposal Tuesday to submit a \$1 bid to purchase the vacated University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point buildings on Stewart Avenue, with the intended use as a new police station. Alders voted six yes, one no, and one abstention. A separate \$50,000 appropriation for design and consulting costs failed because it required all eight present alders to vote affirmatively and fell two votes short. Mayor Doug Diny said the unsuccessful financing vote does not prevent the city from proceeding if selected, noting the city would have six months to identify funding if its bid is chosen. Alder Sarah Watson abstained from all votes on the matter because she also serves on the Marathon County Board, which holds final authority over the sale. Proposals are due to Marathon County by Monday, August 24, at 10:00 a.m.; county staff will review submissions through that week before forwarding a recommendation to the County Board for a final vote in early September.

Source: WDLB 1450 AM Marshfield (Central/Northern) | <https://wdlbam.com/2026/08/22/22747/>

'A place we can actually call home': Port Washington firefighters, police officers move into new station

The Port Washington Common Council approved a developer's agreement this week to redevelop the city's former public safety stations into condominiums, coinciding with the opening of a new \$32 million combined police and fire facility at the northwest corner of Grand Avenue and County Trunk Highway LL. The building is currently approximately \$1 million under budget, according to department leaders. The facility includes separate garage bays for fire trucks and police squad vehicles, sleeping quarters, and an on-site gym. The fire side features Ozaukee County's first burn house for live fire training exercises, and the police side includes a 180-degree training simulator for scenario-based exercises. Fire Chief Joe DeBoer and Interim Police Chief Craig Czarnecki are leading their respective departments in the new station. A public open house is planned for October.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/ozaukee-county/a-place-we-can-actually-call-home-port-washington-firefighters-police-officers-move-into-new-station>

Public Safety

Sheriff's office may loan out deputies to Beloit's understaffed PD through 2027

Rock County Sheriff Curtis Fell announced August 17, 2026, that his office is prepared to loan four deputies to the Beloit Police Department to address a staffing shortfall that Fell projects could last through the end of 2027. Beloit PD has 74 officers budgeted but is currently staffed at 55, a shortfall of 19 officers by the department's own count. The arrangement would place two sheriff's deputies on each of Beloit's afternoon and overnight shifts. Fell said he requested two additional deputies from Rock County Administrator John Light earlier in 2026 to facilitate the loan, and is now requesting two more to backfill his own department. The sheriff's office will charge Beloit a flat fee plus fuel costs for patrol vehicles. The contract was the subject of a closed-session Beloit City Council discussion on the evening of August 17. The council discussion represents the next formal procedural step before any agreement is finalized.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/sheriffs-office-may-loan-out-deputies-to-beloits-understaffed-pd-through-2027/article_37ddae28-8518-4cf2-910d-c8ed5a8e5b09.html

What's behind the Oregon School District, Village of Oregon school resource officer dispute

Oregon School District students began the 2026-27 school year without a school resource officer after the district and the Village of Oregon failed to reach a new intergovernmental agreement before classes started. The Village confirmed Thursday that insufficient time remained for a revised agreement to be reviewed and approved by both governing bodies before the school year opened. Oregon Police Chief Jennifer Pagenkopf cited two police investigations during the 2025-26 school year involving allegations of inappropriate behavior between faculty and students at Oregon High School as the catalyst for seeking revised terms, stating that a delay in police notification in one case caused investigators to miss an interview opportunity and lose access to digital evidence. The Village's proposal places the SRO under the exclusive direction, supervision, command, and control of the police chief, while the district's draft includes a meet-and-consult

process governing parent notification and investigation sequencing. The district said it remains open to continued negotiations, and any new agreement would require approval from both governing bodies.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/22/whats-behind-oregon-school-district-village-oregon-school-resource-officer-dispute/>

Committee appoints interim leadership at Lafayette County EMS

The Lafayette County EMS Committee voted at its Friday meeting to appoint Jed Schultz as Interim Director and Kathryn Chase as Interim Assistant Director of Lafayette County EMS, filling vacancies created when Director Shawn Phillips resigned July 29 and Assistant Director Jami Boss resigned July 26. Phillips, originally hired in March 2021 as the agency's first full-time director following the dissolution of Rural Medical Service, had remained to assist until a replacement was identified. Boss, who had held the assistant director role since September 2023, resigned to return to an EMT role within the organization. EMS Committee Chair Bob Boyle said both Schultz and Chase have worked with the agency for several years and that Schultz holds all required certifications; Schultz has also been coordinating with state regulators to ensure an uninterrupted service transition. The interim appointments are expected to last at least one month. The committee set a September 7 application deadline for permanent hires and will begin interviews the following month.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/committee-appoints-interim-leadership-at-lafayette-county-ems/>

Waushara County explores EMS merger with Marquette County

The Waushara County Public Safety Committee met August 11 to discuss the future of the county's EMS department following staffing changes, including the recent acceptance of resignations from personnel including Keith Melvin. The committee explored a potential EMS merger with neighboring Marquette County as a structural response to the department's staffing situation. No vote outcome, resolution identifier, or merger agreement terms are reported in the available text. The next procedural steps and additional details of the discussion, including any timeline for a formal merger proposal, are not disclosed in the accessible portion of the article, which is behind a subscription paywall.

Source: Waushara Argus (Northeastern) | <https://wausharaargus.com/stories/waushara-county-explores-ems-merger-with-marquette-county,350484>

Financial advisor shows Sugar Creek possible cost of new fire station after leaving Elkhorn fire agreement

Ehlers municipal financial advisor Kayla Thorpe presented a cost study to the Sugar Creek town board Monday estimating that a combined new fire station and town hall could cost approximately \$8 million. Sugar Creek, which currently owns no fire station despite years of contributions to the Elkhorn Area Fire Agreement, voted earlier to exit that agreement after 2028; East Troy's fire department is set to assume coverage beginning in 2029. Town Chairman David Robers identified an existing vacant site adjacent to town hall as the proposed construction location. Thorpe advised the board to begin fiscal planning immediately, cautioning that delayed action could produce a \$300,000 deficit by October 2028. She also noted Sugar Creek's stagnant

population growth limits its ability to raise property tax levy revenue, complicating financing. Robers said after the presentation that East Troy is prepared to relocate existing fire and emergency vehicles to Sugar Creek once the station is built.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/walworth-county/financial-advisor-shows-sugar-creek-possible-cost-of-new-fire-station-after-leaving-elkhorn-fire-agreement>

Ripon Area Fire District receives grant for Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services presented a \$2,420 grant check to the Ripon Area Fire District on Monday, August 18, 2026, delivered in person by Department Secretary Dan Hereth. The grant is drawn from a \$75,000 statewide fund dedicated to assisting fire departments with recruitment and operational sustainability; other area recipients include Beaver Dam and Fox Valley Technical College. The district, a hybrid department combining full-time daytime staff with paid on-call volunteers for other shifts, plans to use the funds to recruit one Ripon High School senior into a Youth Apprenticeship Program. Under the program, the student would attend morning classes at Ripon High School, report to the firehouse for afternoon training, and then complete coursework at Fox Valley Technical College following graduation. Grant funds may be applied to equipment, training, or travel costs. Fire Chief Rick James acknowledged the award publicly; Assistant Chief Heather Donovan was also present at the ceremony.

Source: Ripon Commonwealth Press (Northeastern) | https://riponpress.com/news/rafd-receives-grant-for-youth-apprenticeship-program/article_c897e68d-311b-4c70-a82c-766fb67a6b73.html

Madison College's Reedsburg campus introduces paramedic training program

Madison College's Reedsburg campus is launching a one-year paramedic technical diploma program designed to address rural emergency medical services workforce shortages in the region. The program, announced August 20, 2026, by Shawna Marquardt, Madison College dean of branch campuses, will span spring, summer, and fall semesters and prepare graduates to attain National Registry Paramedic certification for employment with fire departments, ambulance services, hospitals, and emergency response organizations. Students must hold EMT certification prior to enrollment, which can also be obtained at Madison College Reedsburg. An Introduction to Paramedicine course is required this fall, with the full program beginning in January. Josh Kowalke, director of Reedsburg Ambulance, confirmed that recruiting and retaining paramedics remains one of the most substantial challenges facing rural EMS, and that local program availability eliminates the need for students to travel long distances for training.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/20/madison-colleges-reedsburg-campus-introduces-paramedic-training-program/>

\$1.3M jail redesign plan gets green light from La Crosse County

The La Crosse County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on August 21, 2026, to approve spending up to \$1.3 million on architectural design plans for a remodel of the county jail, the facility's first major renovation since 2010. The resolution designates contractor Kraemer Brothers and designer Klein McCarthy to develop a formal renovation plan, selected by county and sheriff's office staff from a handful of submitted options. The \$1.3 million will be funded through savings in the 2026 budget and covers design costs only; staff and board members estimate the

construction phase could cost an additional \$10 million or more. The redesign would reconfigure two sections of the jail to create more open space and natural light and would relocate female inmates to an area with improved access to programming and services, addressing longstanding mental health service delivery challenges. Sheriff John Siegel estimated the completed design plan would take approximately three months. The full renovation plan will return to the county board for approval before construction proceeds.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_946123f4-a91d-4dce-afa2-d870847d0792.html

Dane County's risk assessments for bail don't work, Harvard lab says

The Access to Justice Lab at Harvard Law School completed a randomized study, commissioned approximately a decade ago by Arnold Ventures, examining the effectiveness of the Public Safety Assessment used in Dane County pretrial bail decisions. The study found no statistically significant improvement across any of five measured outcomes: court appearance rates, new criminal activity rates, new violent criminal activity rates, pretrial detention length, and racial disparity measures. It compared cases with and without the assessment across Dane County, Polk County in Iowa, and four Utah counties. Jim Greiner, director of the Harvard lab, said the tool neither worsened outcomes nor improved them. Colleen Clark-Bernhardt, director of Dane County's Office of Justice Reform, said the county adopted the assessment as a data-driven tool to reduce unnecessary pretrial detention while protecting public safety without worsening racial disparities. Greiner attributed the tool's ineffectiveness partly to bail itself deterring only a small fraction of individuals from failing to appear or reoffending. The lab issued recommendations to Dane County, which were not detailed in the published article.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/dane-county-s-risk-assessments-for-bail-don-t-work-harvard-lab-says/article_ca01a90c-7f40-4666-a03d-a6618345881e.html

Meet the new AI bot answering non-emergency calls in Dane County

Dane County launched an AI virtual assistant called Ava, developed by software company Aurelian, to handle non-emergency public safety calls routed to the county's 608-255-2345 dispatch line. County Executive Melissa Agard and Public Safety Communications Department Director Luis Bixler announced the rollout Tuesday at the City-County Building in Madison. The annual cost of the system is approximately \$180,000. Of the roughly 375,000 calls the department received last year, more than 200,000 were non-emergency. Bixler said Ava is expected to absorb approximately 60 percent of non-emergency call volume, allowing one staff member to monitor those calls rather than four or six call takers. The department currently operates 21 dispatch stations and is staffed with 77 communicators and 10 supervisors. A new facility slated to open next year will double the number of dispatch stations. The department reduced overtime costs by \$200,000 last year compared with prior periods when forced overtime exceeded 5,000 hours annually.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/government/meet-the-new-ai-bot-answering-non-emergency-calls-in-dane-county/article_ac257151-a740-4e80-8694-c92b3e8ea756.html

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

Wisconsin's 2021 state law requires the Department of Justice to catalog serious police uses of force by law enforcement agencies statewide, but inconsistent reporting definitions undermine cross-agency comparisons. The law limits DOJ collection to incidents resulting in great bodily harm or death and those involving gunfire; a separate law requires logging deaths occurring during arrest regardless of direct force causation. The DOJ combines both sets in its public Use-of-Force and Arrest-Related Death database. Internal Madison Police Department 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 roughly 185,000 annual calls for service. Madison and Milwaukee require after-action reports for firearm-pointing incidents; Green Bay does not, though it requires them for vehicle-pursuit maneuvers. Matt Graham of the Center for Policing Equity noted that more comprehensive departmental reporting can make agencies appear more force-prone, potentially discouraging transparency. The DOJ database captured the December 2024 arrest-related death of Richard Johnson, an entry absent from Madison's internal records.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/wisconsin-tracks-police-use-of-force-numbers-are-hard-to-compare/>

New body cam video released from Brookfield police traffic stop after Flock alert mix-up

Brookfield Police Chief Christopher Garcia publicly defended a high-risk traffic stop conducted August 6, 2024, in which multiple Brookfield officers drew weapons on a driver and passenger after a Flock automated license plate recognition system flagged their vehicle as connected to a Milwaukee homicide. A Milwaukee Police Department spokesperson confirmed the alert resulted from human error, stating that Milwaukee police staff inadvertently did not remove a vehicle alert from the system after the vehicle had already been released from evidence. The spokesperson specified the failure was not a Flock system malfunction but an internal data-management lapse. Garcia stated that Brookfield officers did not stop the wrong vehicle and performed their duties as she would expect. Brookfield police released new bodycam footage of the stop on Friday. No next procedural step was reported, and no disciplinary or corrective action against Milwaukee police personnel was announced in the article.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/new-body-cam-video-released-from-brookfield-police-traffic-stop-after-flock-alert-mix-up>

Public scrutiny had 'nothing to do' with West Salem Flock camera removal

The West Salem Police Department announced Friday it would remove all five of its Flock license-plate-reader cameras, citing high costs, vandalism risk, and an imbalance in use between outside agencies and village officers. Police Chief Scott Alo, who became West Salem's chief in 2024, said the department's two-year Flock contract cost \$30,000 and was not justified by the department's own usage frequency. The cameras were originally funded by community donations that have since dried up. Alo noted that West Salem's Flock data was accessed more often by outside law enforcement agencies than by village officers, though he said he did not know which specific agencies accessed the data. The department leases rather than owns the cameras. Alo stated that public criticism of Flock technology played no role in the decision, but that the threat

of vandalism, following the August theft of all eight Flock cameras used by the Winona, Minnesota police department, was a factor in the removal.

Source: La Crosse Tribune (Western) | https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/government-politics/article_d9ca7504-4e0a-4ebf-aa2c-99ab496e69e7.html

Manitowoc Police Launch Flock Camera Transparency Portal

Manitowoc Police Chief John Musial launched a Flock Camera transparency portal, accessible through the Chief's welcome page on the City of Manitowoc website, to provide public accountability for the department's license plate reader program. The portal is updated daily and publishes three categories of data: the total number of Flock cameras deployed in the city, the cumulative number of searches conducted, and documented case outcomes. The launch follows documented incidents statewide in which police officers misused Flock cameras to track former partners and to flag license plates of individuals with no criminal nexus. Musial stated publicly that reported capabilities including racial identification of vehicle operators and unrestricted individual tracking are false. No vote count, contract value, or camera quantity was reported in the article. The portal is currently live at the city's website; no additional procedural steps were identified.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/08/21/manitowoc-police-launch-flock-camera-transparency-portal/>

Neighborhood burglaries to nationwide grid; The origins of Flock Safety

Flock Safety, an automated license plate recognition technology company founded in Atlanta in 2017, now operates more than 120,000 cameras across 49 states and serves more than 6,000 law enforcement agencies, including rural Wisconsin police departments. The company charges subscribing agencies approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000 per camera annually under a Safety-as-a-Service model that bundles hardware, software, maintenance, and cellular connectivity. Flock reached an \$8.4 billion valuation following a \$275 million Series F funding round, with total capital raised approaching \$1 billion from backers including Andreessen Horowitz, Tiger Global Management, and Founders Fund. The company's inter-agency data-sharing software sends real-time alerts to patrol officers when a flagged vehicle passes any connected camera, creating cross-jurisdictional network effects. Legacy systems cost up to \$20,000 per camera and required hardwired infrastructure; Flock's solar-powered, cellular-connected alternative lowered the barrier to adoption. Civic debate in adopting communities has shifted from deployment decisions to data-governance policy.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Statewide) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/regional_news/article_1abd17ab-9765-5b10-adfa-c17e49b874b9.html

Former Racine County Sheriff's Office deputy sentenced in attempted misconduct, domestic abuse case

A Racine County Circuit Court sentenced former Racine County Sheriff's Office deputy Jonathan Bechman on Friday to six months in jail and three years of probation after he pleaded guilty to three misdemeanor counts: attempted misconduct in office and two domestic abuse charges against his wife, Jennifer Bechman. The criminal complaint documents two specific acts of physical violence against Jennifer Bechman and alleges ongoing domestic violence throughout

their 30-year marriage. The complaint further states that while Bechman was employed by the Sheriff's Office, documents found on his desk indicated he had attempted to use department resources to locate his wife's residence; that conduct was reported January 8, 2026. According to the Racine County Sheriff's Office, Bechman ended his employment on May 1, 2025, at which time he had been on administrative leave with pay. Bechman has until September 18 to report to the Racine County Jail.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/racine-county/former-racine-county-sheriffs-office-deputy-sentenced-in-attempted-misconduct-domestic-abuse-case>

Wausau police chief addresses criticism over officers' use of force in arrest of teenage girl

Wausau Police Chief Matt Barnes issued a public statement via the department's Facebook page on August 16, 2026, addressing officers' actions during an incident involving 11 intoxicated teenagers. Barnes said he reviewed officers' body camera footage in its entirety and determined the officers acted within department policy and consistent with their training. According to Barnes, the full incident lasted approximately 90 minutes, a longer span than the partial video circulating on social media. A petition on Change.org is demanding mandatory, comprehensive de-escalation and crisis intervention training for all Wausau Police Department officers, citing allegations that a male officer used excessive force against a 15-year-old girl and continued to kneel on her back after she was handcuffed. The petition specifically calls on the department and city officials to implement the training. No vote, formal disciplinary proceeding, or city council hearing date has been announced as a next step.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/08/17/ausau-police-chief-addresses-criticism-over-officers-use-force-arrest-teenage-girl/>

Welfare check in Green Bay ends in deadly police shooting

Green Bay police officers shot and killed a suspect during a welfare check call on August 21, 2026, at approximately 3:09 p.m. in the 1700 block of Boland Road. Three officers discharged their firearms after the suspect brandished a weapon, according to the Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigation. The suspect was transported to a local hospital and pronounced dead. Green Bay Police Chief Chris Davis confirmed no officers were injured. All involved officers were equipped with body-worn cameras and were placed on administrative leave per agency policy. DCI is leading the investigation with assistance from a DCI Crime Response Specialist, the Wisconsin State Patrol, the Brown County Sheriff's Office, and the Green Bay Metro Fire Department. Upon conclusion, DCI will forward investigative reports to the Brown County District Attorney's office for review.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/green-bay/heavy-police-presence-on-green-bays-west-side>

Appleton Police continues noise violation crackdown in downtown corridor

The Appleton Police Department issued 306 noise-related enforcement actions in the city's downtown corridor from January through May 2026, a 43 percent increase over the same period in prior years and the highest five-year total for that stretch, according to data released jointly by the

Police and Health Departments. The department attributes the increase to additional enforcement activity rather than a rise in resident complaints. Cited violations include equipping a motor vehicle with an illegal muffler, operating without an adequate muffler, excessive revving or squealing tires, loud or unnecessary noise, and modified or defective exhaust. Mayor Jake Woodford noted the department had added two dedicated traffic safety officers over the last four years and had recently expanded equipment-violation citations. The enforcement push follows a September 2024 community campaign by a group called Stop the Noise. The full data report was published on the Appleton Health Department's Facebook page.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://wtaq.com/2026/08/21/appleton-police-continues-noise-violation-crackdown-in-downtown-corridor/>

Rhineland government warns of scam attempts

The City of Rhineland issued a public warning on August 20, 2026, alerting residents to an active scam in which fraudulent emails impersonating the city planning department solicit payments. The scam emails originate from addresses ending in @usa.com; all legitimate City of Rhineland communications use accounts ending in @rhinelandwi.us. City officials stated the city will never request payment via wire transfer. As of the warning's publication, no Rhineland residents are known to have fallen victim to the scheme. Multiple other Wisconsin municipalities have been targeted by the same type of scam. Residents who receive suspicious communications are directed to report them to the City Clerk's Office or the Rhineland Police Department.

Source: WXPB 91.7 FM Rhineland (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wxpr.org/crime-courts/2026-08-20/rhineland-government-warns-of-scam-attempts>

FOLLOW-UP: Office of Emergency Management answers questions on failed tornado sirens

The Milwaukee County Office of Emergency Management confirmed that a radio communication failure caused approximately 20 tornado sirens, including units in West Allis, to fail to activate during a Tuesday storm event. The issue was identified and resolved within approximately 15 minutes; the sirens themselves were not mechanically broken. The failure occurred among older siren units not yet transitioned to the county's replacement system. Milwaukee County is mid-project on replacing all 58 tornado sirens countywide, with 20 fully replaced and commissioned on the new system and the remainder in varying stages of replacement. The project has been ongoing for two to three years and is expected to be completed in early 2027. OEM stated that the updated system would eliminate the type of radio communication failure that occurred Tuesday. The county cited access and equity concerns, specifically residents without reliable access to phones, television, or radio, as primary justification for reinvesting in siren infrastructure rather than decommissioning it.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/follow-up-office-of-emergency-management-answers-questions-on-failed-tornado-sirens>

Wisconsin National Guard closes out Fox Valley tornado mission

The Wisconsin National Guard concluded a 16-day domestic operations deployment in the Fox Valley on August 21, 2026, after Gov. Tony Evers declared a state of emergency following an EF-3

tornado that struck the Menasha and Appleton area. Soldiers were first activated July 30, with the 1157th Transportation Company based in Oshkosh serving as the initial unit assigned to assist Winnebago County civil authorities under the designation Task Force Sturgeon. By the end of the activation, 85 soldiers drawn from multiple Wisconsin National Guard units had performed three primary functions: facilitating street closures to support utility repair work, managing vehicle access to severely damaged residential neighborhoods, and overseeing natural debris collection sites. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joshua Baranczyk served as task force officer-in-charge during the second week of the deployment. The tornado caused widespread infrastructure damage, power outages, and public water system disruptions across the affected area.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/wisconsin-national-guard-closes-out-mission-after-fox-valley-tornado-governor-tony-evers-menasha-appleton-debris-damage-power-outage-water-system-winnebago-county-oshkosh>

Storm victims can get FEMA help at pop-up event in Ringle Wednesday

Marathon County residents affected by the April 13 to 23 severe storms, including the Ringle tornado, have until August 31, 2026, to apply for FEMA individual assistance or a Small Business Administration home disaster loan. As of the article's publication, 76 Marathon County residents had submitted FEMA applications. The Disaster Recovery Center in the town of Ringle and the Business Recovery Center at the Marathon County Public Library have both closed. FEMA is hosting two pop-up assistance events at the Ringle Municipal Center, 223207 Abt Road, Ringle, on August 19 and August 26, each from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Residents must complete a new application even if a FEMA assessment team visited their home in May or if they reported damage through the 211 system. Applications can be submitted at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362. The August 31 deadline is the final step before the federal assistance window closes.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/08/17/people-impacted-by-april-storms-have-2-weeks-left-apply-fema-assistance/>

Ringle tornado relief fund continues aid effort four months later

The Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin's emergency relief fund, established within hours of the April 17 EF-3 tornado that damaged more than 75 homes in Ringle in Marathon County, has raised \$438,000 from more than 1,200 contributors as of August 18, 2026. Tim Parker, President and CEO of the foundation, reported that 51 percent of the fund, approximately \$224,000, has been distributed to tornado victims, leaving roughly \$214,000 available for future grants. The foundation also operates a deductible-assistance program that covers \$1,000 of insurance deductibles per applicant; 84 residents have applied for that program. The deadline to apply for deductible assistance is August 31, which coincides with the FEMA and SBA loan application deadline. Parker said early fund expenditures covered food and debris removal, followed by a recovery phase supporting roof and structure repairs; remaining funds are earmarked for long-term needs including mental-health counseling. Donations to the fund remain open-ended.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/08/19/ringle-tornado-relief-fund-continues-aid-effort-four-months-later/>

Land Use and Development

City of Milton passes 18-month data center moratorium

The Milton Common Council approved an 18-month moratorium on data centers on August 18, 2026, framing the action as a zoning code review process rather than a development moratorium to comply with a state statute that caps development moratoriums at 12 months. Alderperson Ken Smith proposed extending the moratorium from an earlier 12-month draft produced in July, citing insufficient state and federal legislative guidance on data center impacts. The council cited concerns about noise, air and water quality, water sufficiency, and community character in the ordinance. The council also approved a phased 18-month work plan: research and utility coordination meetings run September 13 through December 19, 2026; impact analysis and policy direction from January through March 2027; and zoning framework drafting from April through June 2027. A separate ordinance prohibits city officials from entering non-disclosure agreements involving commercial development proposals with potential impacts on water, electrical systems, land use, environmental resources, or road systems. The draft zoning ordinance will proceed to the Planning and Zoning Commission before returning to the Common Council.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/city-of-milton-passes-18-month-data-center-moratorium/article_1f8796b2-6702-46e7-97e5-efd0ecfe9ac1.html

Oneida County implements one-year moratorium on data centers

The Oneida County Board of Supervisors voted 20-0, with one member absent, on August 18, 2026, to adopt a one-year moratorium on data centers, effective from the date of adoption. The moratorium was initiated to allow the Planning and Development Committee time to amend relevant sections of the Oneida County Code, study growth impacts, update comprehensive plans, and draft new zoning rules without pressure from incoming projects. Karl Jennrich, Oneida County Planning and Zoning department head, cited discussions among Wisconsin County Code Administrators about how to regulate data centers, noting their community impacts including increased local electricity and water consumption, constant industrial noise, and air pollution from backup diesel generators. The moratorium remains in effect for 12 months unless replaced or extended by the County Board of Supervisors. The Planning and Development Committee will use the moratorium period to develop formal zoning regulations governing data center siting in the county.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/oneida-county-implements-one-year-moratorium-on-data-centers/article_1e82d029-b25d-44d8-b9d9-0a20ad572fd5.html

Dodge County approves 18-month data center moratorium

The Dodge County Board of Supervisors voted 29-2 on August 21, 2026, to approve an 18-month moratorium on data center development in the county's unincorporated areas. The Dodge County Land Resources and Parks Committee had previously approved the moratorium's wording. The moratorium is intended to give the county time to develop a land-use ordinance specific to data centers and to conduct an impact study before permitting additional facilities. Two data center projects are already under way near Beaver Dam: Meta is constructing a \$1 billion, 700,000-square-foot facility on 350 acres north of Beaver Dam between Highway A and Hemlock Road, and Oppidan is planning a 90,000-square-foot facility on 13 acres near the intersection of

Highways 151 and Hemlock Road. Watertown Supervisor Cathy Houchin cited public testimony as a reason to support the pause. The Land Resources and Parks Committee will use the 18-month period to study impacts and possibly recommend permanent zoning and planning changes.

Source: WiscNews (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_cf741c94-19d3-4982-af77-969e092233c9.html

Wisconsin Rapids data center developer talks cooling and water usage during virtual session

PNK Group, the proposed data center developer for the former Rapids mill site in Wisconsin Rapids, held its second public information session via Zoom on August 19, 2026, focusing on water usage and the Wisconsin River. Jim Gardler, a consultant with Bala Consulting Engineers working on behalf of PNK Group, described the facility's planned closed-loop cooling system, which would use a mixture of water and propylene glycol delivered by tanker truck from manufacturers rather than drawn from the Wisconsin River. Gardler also stated the coolant would not be discharged into the Wisconsin River and that propylene glycol is not classified as a PFAS substance. The session was PNK Group's second of four scheduled community information webinars; two additional sessions are scheduled for the following week over Zoom, covering noise impacts and a proposed community benefits agreement. Community members have raised water-use concerns since the data center plans became public earlier in 2026.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/wisconsin-rapids-data-center-developer-talks-cooling-and-water-usage-during-virtual-session/article_f0f59235-d236-4562-9b4e-1638dd5d166c.html

Kewaskum residents push back on proposed sports complex, hotel and 300-home development

The Kewaskum Village Board held a nearly four-hour public meeting Monday at which residents voiced opposition to a proposed development in the village's northern section that would include a sports complex, a hotel, and approximately 300 homes. Speakers raised concerns about traffic volume, property values, wildlife impacts, and the board's pace of communication. Resident Allen Heberer identified three bald eagle nests within the development's proposed footprint and called on the board to address their protection. Interim Village Administrator Tammy Butz read a prepared statement acknowledging that traffic and environmental studies are currently underway but said the board does not yet have answers to residents' specific questions. No vote was taken at the meeting. Residents indicated they intend to continue attending future board meetings to oppose the project. No scheduled date for a follow-up board action or vote was reported in the article.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/washington-county/kewaskum-residents-push-back-on-proposed-sports-complex-hotel-and-300-home-development>

Altoona pivots 80-acre affordable housing plan over high infrastructure costs

The Altoona City Council has authorized staff to explore light industrial and commercial uses for a vacant 80-acre city-owned parcel off Highway 12, abandoning the site's original designation under the 2022 East Neighborhood Residential Development Plan. The residential concept, which

targeted starter homes priced between \$300,000 and \$325,000, stalled after estimated infrastructure costs of \$11 million to \$12 million rendered the project financially unworkable for private developers; a formal request for proposals drew no responses. City Administrator Mike Golat confirmed that neither land discounts nor city cost absorption produced a viable development agreement. Separately, the closure of Tax Increment District No. 3 generated approximately \$6 million, which the city is now deploying through an affordable housing fund that includes the Safe Steps home-improvement loan program and a low-income first-time homebuyer loan assistance program under development. Transitioning the 80-acre parcel to industrial or commercial use will require formal amendments to Altoona's Comprehensive Plan and local zoning ordinances; public engagement is planned before alternative proposals are finalized.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/20/altoona-pivots-80-acre-affordable-housing-plan-over-high-infrastructure-costs/>

City subsidy for office-to-apartment conversion wins first approval

Milwaukee's Redevelopment Authority board voted August 20 to endorse a proposed tax incremental financing district to help fund the conversion of the vacant 14-story east tower of the 310W Building, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., into 220 apartments. The \$73.6 million project is led by Time Equities Inc. and its affiliate 310W Wisconsin Rollup LLC, with Kubala Washatko as architect. City financing totals \$6.44 million, to be disbursed through the redeveloped building's incremental property tax revenue over 18 years. Of the 220 units, 50 studio and one-bedroom apartments are designated for households earning 70 percent to 90 percent of area median income. A Time Equities affiliate acquired the building in 2017 for \$19.5 million. The west tower retains a 45 percent occupancy rate with tenants including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Social Security Administration. The Common Council is scheduled to review TIF district approval in September. Time Equities plans to close financing by year-end, begin renovations in early 2027, and complete construction in approximately 20 months.

Source: The Daily Reporter (Southeastern) | <https://dailyreporter.com/2026/08/21/city-approves-subsidy-310w-office-to-apartment-milwaukee/>

Rockwell seeks next round of approvals from New Berlin Plan Commission

The New Berlin Plan Commission convened August 19 to review Rockwell Automation's use, site, and architectural approval application for a proposed 810,000-square-foot manufacturing facility along the south side of the 14000 block of West Grange Avenue. The commission's review follows the New Berlin Common Council's unanimous July 28 approval of a land use map amendment, a planned unit development with manufacturing zoning, and a series of certified survey maps for the project. The Plan Commission had unanimously recommended those approvals on July 15. Rockwell Vice President of Supply Chain Strategy and Planning Kyle Lindberg has stated expected capital investment of \$211 million to \$246 million, with hundreds of new jobs. Separately, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources notified Rockwell on August 6 that its individual wetland disturbance permit application, submitted July 9, was incomplete, requesting clearer depiction of erosion control measures and justification for the proposed culvert pipe design. No action date on the DNR permit has been reported.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/business/rockwell-automation-new-berlin-review/article_cc965706-289d-5fe9-bb20-6c2c982238a2.html

City of Oak Creek Officially Approves Buc-ee's Construction Deal, Will Be First Wisconsin Location

The Oak Creek Common Council voted unanimously Tuesday evening to approve a development agreement with Buc-ee's for the chain's first Wisconsin location. The agreement includes a one-time \$350,000 payment from Buc-ee's to a city-chosen community project, to be made after the station opens. The deal also requires Buc-ee's to break ground by September 1, 2026, and complete construction by August 1, 2028. As part of the agreement, the council approved renaming Elm Road to Buc-ee's Boulevard, the street on which the travel center will be located. Buc-ee's, founded in Texas in 1982, has operated outside Texas since 2019 and currently runs 56 locations across multiple states including Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee. The groundbreaking deadline of September 1, 2026, is the next formal milestone under the approved agreement.

Source: WSAU 550 AM / 99.9 FM Wausau (Southeastern) | <https://wsau.com/2026/08/19/city-of-oak-creek-officially-approves-buc-ees-deal-will-be-first-wisconsin-location/>

City of Eau Claire Considers Feasibility Study For 'Riverwalk District'

The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority is scheduled to meet August 19, 2026, at 7:30 a.m. at City Hall's North Conference Room, 203 S. Farwell St., to discuss and potentially authorize a Request for Proposal for a feasibility study on the riverwalk district portion of the Core Reinvestment District. The riverwalk district covers areas from 1st Avenue to Water Street and Menomonie Street along the Chippewa River. The Core Reinvestment District, one of two long-term redevelopment plans formally introduced to City Council in June 2026, spans from Lake Street to Clairemont Avenue and addresses aging housing stock, obsolete commercial properties, and vacant or underutilized parcels within federally designated Qualified Census Tracts. The authority entered FY2026 with approximately \$200,000 in its annual budget; the cost of the feasibility study has not been determined pending RFP issuance. The proposed study includes six phases covering stakeholder engagement, economic analysis, conceptual options development, risk assessment, and a final presentation of recommendations.

Source: Volume One (Western) | <https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/08/18/399666-city-of-eau-claire-considers-feasibility-study-for-riverwalk-district-core-redevelopment-district>

RDA provides feedback on economic development plan

The Watertown Redevelopment Authority reviewed and provided feedback on the city's new economic development plan during an August 20, 2026, meeting. The plan identifies five strategic focus areas, agriculture, skilled trades, healthcare, commercial, and recreation, and proposes initiatives including agritourism development, workforce training through Madison College and regional high schools, downtown and South Church Street business support, and expanded Rock River recreation access. RDA Vice Chair Steve Board noted that hotel occupancy runs 50 to 60 percent even during tournaments, and raised concerns that the plan omits infrastructure and residential development components. Board also cited a population decline from more than 25,000 residents when he moved to Watertown 15 years ago to the current posted figure of 22,000-plus. Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives Deb Sybell said housing efforts are active, including a recent site visit with a developer familiar with the low-income housing tax credit program. District 7 Alder Tony Arnett, who presented the plan to the Council earlier in August, identified utility extension constraints as a barrier to industrial expansion.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/rda-provides-feedback-on-economic-development-plan/article_d50d1054-f3b0-4d6c-8133-debbd2a3819d.html

Court rules in favor of City of Prescott in legal dispute with Leo's Landing

The Pierce County Circuit Court signed a ruling on August 7 in favor of the City of Prescott in its dispute with Leo's Landing marina, confirming the city as the legal owner of the contested riverfront parcel and its associated riparian rights. Barring an appeal, Leo's Landing must remove its marina structure by November 30. The city filed the original legal action in 2024 after issuing the Anderson family, operators of Leo's Landing since 1984, a one-year lease for 2024 rather than the five-year leases they had previously received. The disputed property sits along the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers and has been operated as a marina under various owners since at least 1948. City Administrator Matt Wolf said dock design work, which had been paused during litigation, will now resume. The city holds a \$53,395 DNR Boating Infrastructure Grant for dock design, which must be completed by September 2027 to receive the funds. The vacated site is planned for Phase 2 of Prescott's Riverfront Improvement Project, which includes a public boat dock.

Source: Pierce County Journal (Western) | <https://www.piercecountyjournal.news/stories/court-rules-in-favor-of-city-of-prescott-in-legal-dispute-with-leos-landing,202720>

DNR draws a line in the sand in debate over beach access

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, following a July 29 site visit near Lion's Den Gorge Nature Preserve in the Town of Grafton and City of Port Washington, marked the ordinary high-water mark on the Lake Michigan shoreline and directed lakeshore property owners to remove posts planted in the water with ropes attached that block public beach passage. DNR Waterway Field Supervisor Travis Schroeder determined that a post in the water constitutes a structure requiring a permit, triggering a stepped enforcement process. That process begins with voluntary compliance notification, advances to a notice of noncompliance, then a notice of violation, and culminates in a citation or lawsuit if the owner refuses. No citations have been issued as of the article's reporting. Separately, in June, Ozaukee County installed warning signs at the nature preserve boundary; after one sign was destroyed, the county replaced it with a permanent structure. A related Milwaukee County circuit court trespass case involving Lake Michigan beach access is ongoing.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/dnr-draws-line-sand-debate-over-beach-access>

Natural Resources Board approves Willow Flowage addition

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board voted to approve the acquisition of 77 acres of land from the Kenneth W. Aldridge Living Trust to expand the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area in Oneida County. The purchase price is \$231,000, funded through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. DNR Real Estate Section Manager Kaylin Helm noted the parcel lies entirely within the existing Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area project boundary, is accessible via adjacent department-owned land to the south, and fronts Camp Nine Road. The acquisition adds 1.5 miles of river frontage to the publicly accessible area. The Town of Minocqua and Oneida County both submitted resolutions of support for the purchase. The Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area was established in 1997 to preserve the undeveloped character of the corridor, which is used for

canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and wildlife viewing. No further procedural steps were reported following board approval.

Source: WXPB 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wxpr.org/outdoors-leisure-and-sports/2026-08-20/natural-resources-board-approves-willow-flowage-addition>

Calumet County Offering Opportunity For Financial Incentives While Working With Watershed Group

Calumet County's Land and Water Conservation Department announced a partnership with the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance's Rooted & Resilient Program to offer financial incentives to agricultural landowners for water quality and soil health practices. Eligible practices include Water and Sediment Control Basin installation, Grassed or Lined Waterway construction, and Wetland Restoration, among others. To qualify, participants must be a legal property owner in Calumet County, must be registered with USDA-FSA, and must reside within the Lake Winnebago basin. The county department is serving as the local coordinating entity for the outreach effort. Interested landowners may contact Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Agricultural Coordinator Tim Burns at 920-858-3982 or tim@fwwa.org for additional information and to begin the enrollment process.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/08/21/calumet-county-offering-opportunity-for-financial-incentives-while-working-with-watershed-group/>

Film Wisconsin awards first film tax credits

Film Wisconsin, the state's new film office housed within the Department of Tourism, announced the first recipients of Wisconsin's film tax credit program, which makes \$5 million available annually to productions spending money in the state. The program was created by the 2025-27 biennial budget signed by Gov. Tony Evers. Six productions received credits totaling approximately \$1,186,372: "RAO" at \$557,991, "The Warehouse" at \$216,000, "Long Shot: How Bud Selig Brought Baseball Home" at \$167,100, "UECK" at \$140,008, "Run for Glory: The Don Beebe Story" at \$86,000, and "Mis Undead Quince" at \$19,273. "RAO," an independent feature following an Indian American family across three decades, is actively filming in Eau Claire. "UECK," which explores the life of broadcaster Bob Uecker, recorded approximately \$140,000 in qualifying Wisconsin expenditures including local crew hires. Craig Trost, communications director for Travel Wisconsin, identified hotel rooms, catering, and set design as eligible expense categories under the credit.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Statewide) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/21/film-wisconsin-awards-first-film-tax-credits/>

Governance and Elections

Issues with election systems delayed primary results in two Wisconsin counties

During Wisconsin's August 2026 primary, Liberty Vote election technology systems used to transmit unofficial results by modem failed in both Green and Winnebago counties, causing delays in posting unofficial election night results. In Green County, Clerk Arianna Voegeli was unable to process encrypted result files from municipalities beginning at 9 p.m. on Election Day; county staff worked with Liberty Vote without finding a solution, and all results were not uploaded

until 11:30 a.m. the following morning after Voegeli individually contacted all 24 municipal clerks. Voegeli consulted the Wisconsin Elections Commission, which encouraged her to collect results as quickly as possible but provided no hard guidance. Green County has since decided that for the November general election, nearby municipalities will physically deliver unofficial results to the county office while distant municipalities will transmit results by telephone. In Winnebago County, Clerk Julie Barthels redirected municipal clerks to hand-deliver results after modem transmission failed; the last delivery arrived around 10:30 p.m. Winnebago County has not announced any change to its November results-reporting process.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/wisconsin-election-systems-delay-primary-voting-results-green-winnebago-counties/>

Sheboygan County sheriff's deputies at polls ignite voter intimidation concerns

The Sheboygan County Sheriff's Office posted on Facebook seven minutes after polls opened during Wisconsin's August 2026 primary that it was dispatching deputies to polling locations periodically throughout the day to provide a visible law enforcement presence. Sheriff Matthew Spence, who appeared on the primary ballot for reelection while facing no opponent, said deputy visits were brief, lasting five to ten minutes, and were not assigned specifically to monitor voters. Three legal organizations, the ACLU of Wisconsin, Campaign Legal Center, and Law Forward, sent a letter Wednesday to Spence urging steps to prevent voter intimidation. The Wisconsin Democracy Defense Coalition said the decision was made without clear communication with, or consent from, officials across the county. Member organization All In Wisconsin submitted open records requests seeking additional information. Sheboygan County Clerk Jon Dolson said he was unaware any deputy had actually been dispatched. The coalition's open records requests remain pending as of publication.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Southeastern) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/08/20/sheboygan-county-sheriffs-deputies-at-polls-ignite-voter-intimidation-concerns>

BLOC, Law Forward file brief urging Supreme Court to overrule decision on voting hours extension

Black Leaders Organizing for Communities and Law Forward filed a brief Wednesday, August 19, 2026, urging the Wisconsin Supreme Court to accept review of a July 2026 District 2 Court of Appeals ruling that held circuit courts lack authority to extend polling place hours due to unforeseen circumstances. The appeals court majority, written by Judges Mark Gundrum and Shelley Grogan, found that judicial extension of voting hours could undermine confidence in elections. The underlying case stems from a Walworth County circuit court order extending hours at two UW-Whitewater polling locations during the 2024 presidential election after long lines developed, partly due to same-day voter registration. The brief cites 150 years of precedent across at least 12 Wisconsin Supreme Court cases supporting judicial intervention to protect voting rights, including an 1875 ruling. The organizations argue the appeals court decision improperly subordinates the judiciary to the Legislature in violation of the state Constitution's co-equal branches requirement. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has not yet announced whether it will take the case.

Source: Phillips Price County Review (Statewide) | https://apg-wi.com/news/state/bloc-law-forward-file-brief-urging-supreme-court-to-overrule-decision-on-voting-hours-extension/article_1950ad86-6863-5525-8a6c-6988e15dbbbc.html

Milwaukee's top election official will appear in first post primary interview Sunday on 'UPFRONT'

Milwaukee Election Commission Executive Director Paulina Gutierrez will appear Sunday on WISN 12's UPFRONT program for her first public interview following a human-error incident at the city's central count that delayed reporting of August primary results. Gutierrez said the error affected only the timing of posted results and not their accuracy. The Assembly elections committee chair sent Gutierrez a letter Friday requesting answers to a series of questions about the incident, with a 30-day response deadline. Republican State Rep. Scott Krug, the committee's vice chair, said that if officials are not forthcoming, the committee should hold a hearing. Gutierrez indicated the commission is implementing procedural enhancements to prevent recurrence. UPFRONT airs Sunday at 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. on WISN 12 and statewide on ABC affiliates.

Source: WISN 12 ABC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.wisn.com/article/milwaukees-top-election-official-will-appear-in-first-post-primary-interview-sunday-on-upfront/73498778>

Judge denies request to take GOP State Senate candidate off ballot over residency questions

Dane County Circuit Court Judge Jacob Frost on August 20, 2026, denied a Wisconsin State Senate Democratic Committee request to remove Republican candidate Michele Magadance Skinner from the November ballot in Wisconsin's 31st State Senate District. Skinner, who currently serves on the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors, faced allegations from committee attorney David Hollander that she used a Georgia property as her primary residence. Hollander presented evidence including Skinner's 2021 Georgia voter registration, in which she stated she then considered herself a Georgia resident, and tax returns filed by her husband that tied her to the Georgia home. Skinner testified she spends seven months per year in Wisconsin and maintains her primary address in Altoona, with her husband residing in Georgia due to health issues requiring proximity to his doctors. Judge Frost ruled insufficient evidence existed to prove Skinner is not a Wisconsin resident. Skinner will face incumbent Sen. Jeff Smith, who has held the seat since 2019, in the November general election.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Western) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/judge-denies-request-to-take-gop-state-senate-candidate-off-ballot-over-residency-questions/article_ee907b42-e5f8-45e2-a3e1-97cc9ab2c7a5.html

Hakes Wins Primary, Runs Unopposed In November

Chippewa County Sheriff Travis Hakes won the Republican primary on August 11, 2026, securing 7,408 votes, approximately 74 percent, against challenger Mark Hollister, who received 2,627 votes. Hakes will be the only candidate on the November 3, 2026, general election ballot for Chippewa County Sheriff, positioning him to continue in the county department head role absent a write-in campaign. Chippewa County Republican primary turnout reached approximately 10,039 votes in 2026, compared with approximately 6,074 in 2024 and 8,913 in 2022. Democratic primary turnout in Chippewa County was approximately 6,701 votes in 2026, up from 6,024 in 2024 and 4,314 in 2022. The general election is scheduled for November 3, 2026.

Source: Bloomer Advance (Western) | https://www.bloomeradvance.com/news/community_news/article_33a3a0f2-f707-4ab8-b109-dc1bea58fef5.html

Rorvick wins GOP sheriff primary, positioned to succeed Waak

Rob Rorvick won the Polk County Republican sheriff primary on August 19, 2026, defeating Don Burrows by a margin of 53.4 percent to 46.6 percent out of 7,575 total votes cast. Rorvick collected 4,041 votes countywide to Burrows' 3,534. Because no Democrat filed for the seat, the Republican primary functioned as the decisive contest; Rorvick will appear alone on the November ballot, making him the presumptive successor to two-term Sheriff Brent Waak, who is not seeking reelection. In the City of Amery, Rorvick led 195 votes to 141, consistent with his countywide performance, while Burrows carried multiple municipalities including the town of Farmington, 265 to 166, and the village of Osceola, 238 to 159. Barring a formal write-in campaign in November, Rorvick is expected to be sworn in as Polk County Sheriff early in 2027.

Source: Amery Free Press (Western) | https://theameryfreepress.com/news/rorvick-wins-gop-sheriff-primary-positioned-to-succeed-waak/article_79ea80e6-ba97-4100-a24b-7d277a05551a.html

New chairman presides over Lublin Village Board meeting

The Village of Lublin Board met August 4 at Village Hall with newly appointed Chairman Christine Nowak presiding, following the resignation of former Chairman Randy Madlon. Madlon resigned after moving out of the Village of Lublin, triggering the leadership transition. Nowak was subsequently appointed chairman and conducted the August 4 meeting. Village Clerk Rita Niznik used the meeting to recognize organizers of a 50/50 raffle held during Lublin Days, with proceeds donated to the village for park use. Niznik also acknowledged contributors to the village's fireworks fund, stating the fund is sufficient going into the next year. No vote counts, dollar figures, or ordinance identifiers were reported for any action taken at the meeting. The next Village of Lublin Board meeting is scheduled for September 8 at Village Hall.

Source: Stanley Republican (Central/Northern) | <https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/new-chairman-presides-over-lublin-village-board-meeting,202928>

New Glarus Town Board chair convicted in campaign sign theft case

Chris Narveson, 63, chair of the New Glarus Town Board and Green County highway commissioner, was found guilty on Friday of misdemeanor theft and obstructing an officer in connection with the removal of a campaign sign belonging to his April 2025 election opponent, Rob Ready. Each count carries a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine, nine months in jail, or both. According to the criminal complaint, Narveson removed Ready's sign from along Zentner Road on or around March 22, 2025, after the property owner declined to allow Narveson to place his own sign there. A property owner witnessed Narveson pull over, remove the sign, and place it in his truck. Narveson denied taking the sign when contacted by a Green County Sheriff's Office sergeant. Narveson has served on the town board for nearly 20 years and has been its chair since 2015. His plea and sentencing hearing is scheduled for September 8.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/new-glarus-town-board-chair-convicted-in-campaign-sign-theft-case/article_bbe5dda7-77a8-48b7-b917-9befde86dd78.html

'He is unfit to lead': New Berlin mayor under fire after anti-Muslim Facebook posts

New Berlin Mayor Dave Ament faces calls for resignation after anti-Muslim content on his personal Facebook page was discovered, prompting a formal demand from the Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance. The posts included multiple anti-Muslim videos shared over a span of months, with

the most recent appearing within the past two weeks; one post dated August 7, 2026, carried text stating that anyone who voted for a Muslim officeholder is a traitor. Ament changed his Facebook account from public to private late Friday night. Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance representative Fatima Malik publicly condemned the posts and called for Ament's resignation and a formal apology. District 5 Alderman Joseph Stribl issued a written statement disavowing hate speech and discrimination. Most other New Berlin Common Council members were unaware of the situation until contacted by WISN 12. Ament did not respond to reporters at city hall or at his home, and no statement had been issued as of publication.

Source: WISN 12 ABC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.wisn.com/article/he-is-unfit-to-lead-new-berlin-mayor-under-fire-after-anti-muslim-facebook-posts/73499906>

Milwaukee alderman posts fake photo of storm damage 'to grab attention'

Milwaukee Common Council Ald. Lamont Westmoreland, a northwest-side alderman first elected in 2023, posted a fabricated AI-generated image to his official Facebook page depicting the city's Moving City art car crushed by a storm-downed tree. Westmoreland subsequently acknowledged the image was fake, stating he created it to direct public attention to the city's storm-damage reporting process following Tuesday-night storms that moved through Waukesha, Washington, and Milwaukee counties. The Moving City vehicle is a taxpayer-funded project valued at \$88,000, designed to raise awareness of reckless driving in Milwaukee; Westmoreland has previously stated he is skeptical of the vehicle's usefulness. In the post, Westmoreland described the vehicle as an embarrassingly wasteful use of tax dollars. Westmoreland did not respond to a phone message seeking comment on August 19, 2026. The article reports no further disciplinary or council proceedings.

Source: WiscNews (Southeastern) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_a4ca97f1-0b10-5b6c-911e-4385946ee98d.html

City of Chetek to deactivate its social media accounts after threats made to employees

The City of Chetek announced on August 21, 2026, that it will deactivate all municipal social media accounts within 24 hours of an 8:19 a.m. Facebook post, citing threats made against city employees. The city stated the deactivation will also suspend Facebook livestreaming of city meetings for the duration of the period in which accounts remain inactive. No vote count, ordinance number, or specific threatening incident was identified in the announcement. The city did not specify whether the deactivation is permanent or temporary. Residents seeking city information or public meeting access will be unable to use the city's social media platforms during the deactivation period. No alternative meeting access method or timeline for restoration of accounts was announced.

Source: WEAU NBC13 Eau Claire (Western) | <https://www.weau.com/2026/08/21/city-chetek-deactivate-its-social-media-accounts-after-threats-made-employees/>

New Hannon's owner, woman charged with lying to get business loan, liquor license

Sameeh Stanberry Pickens, 45, of the Village of Waukesha, faces two criminal cases, one in Brookfield and one in Waukesha, each charging one count of identity theft and one count of forgery, with maximum penalties of 12 years in prison and \$20,000 in fines per case. Authorities

allege he had Samantha Effertz, 38, pose as his wife to obtain a small-business loan from a Brookfield lender and to file a liquor license application with the City of Waukesha for Hannon's Fine Food and Cocktails, 357 W. Broadway. Staff at the Waukesha clerk's office confirmed Effertz accompanied Stanberry Pickens to file the license forms on April 30. Waukesha City Attorney Brian Running stated the city considers the issued liquor license void and a legal nullity because of credible evidence of a forged signature, meaning Hannon's cannot currently sell alcohol. Stanberry Pickens was released on a \$5,000 signature bond in the Brookfield case; Effertz waived her preliminary hearing, with a further hearing scheduled for September 14.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/waukesha-hannons-owner-court/article_6c0d40a2-f41b-55f7-a3d5-0529246ccd9e.html

Oconomowoc council denies gas station request for bar operations

The Oconomowoc Common Council on August 21, 2026, 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., a tenant space inside the Oconomowoc BP gas station. The Oconomowoc Police Department reviewed the application and recommended denial. The denial followed a July 21 council vote revoking a similar dual license held by Pub Summit LLC at 1004 Summit Ave., also located inside a gas station, after a police inspection found the tavern area open but unstaffed and without any liquor present. Alderman Lou Kowieski said the denial reflected community sentiment rather than BP's operations, and Alderwoman Jennifer Aultman Kloth cited accessibility-to-liquor concerns. In the same meeting, the council approved design guidelines for the Harvest at Pabst Farms mixed-use development and a developer's agreement for Arrowood Phase 6, a 16-lot subdivision.

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

Low vaccination rates drive southwest Wisconsin measles outbreak

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has identified 41 confirmed and 7 probable measles cases across Iowa, Lafayette, and Grant counties as of Friday, August 22, 2026, with all but one infected person having been unvaccinated. State data show Lafayette County's MMR 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 an outbreak. Iowa County Health Officer Debbie Siegenthaler reported her department is identifying cases, tracing exposures, and facilitating testing and vaccination access. Iowa County is scheduled to hold a community vaccination clinic at the Mineral Point Rescue Squad office on Monday, August 24, from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Lafayette County Board of Supervisors Chair Jack Sauer said he anticipates additional cases in his county given the rapid spread in neighboring Iowa County. DHS spokesperson Jennifer Miller attributed spread to geographic pockets of under-vaccination.

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

Fentanyl overdose deaths fall 22% nationwide; Wisconsin sees record 42.5% drop

Wisconsin Department of Health Services data show statewide overdose deaths fell from 1,422 in 2023 to 818 in 2024, a 42.5 percent single-year decline that DHS Director of Substance Use Initiatives Michelle Haese identified as the steepest such drop recorded in Wisconsin. The reduction parallels a 22 percent nationwide decrease in fentanyl-related overdose deaths reported by the CDC, representing approximately 10,000 fewer deaths nationally. In Northeastern Wisconsin, Brown County overdose deaths dropped from 52 in 2022 to 14 in 2023; Winnebago County fell from 29 to 11; and Outagamie County declined from 22 to 18 over the same period. Winnebago County Overdose Fatality Review Team Project Manager Jennifer Skolaski attributed contributing factors to expanded Naloxone access, opioid use disorder medications, and first-responder activity, while noting increased cocaine and methamphetamine presence in the county. DHS cited ongoing investments in destigmatization and treatment as operational drivers of the decline.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Statewide) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/fentanyl-overdose-deaths-fall-22-nationwide-wisconsin-sees-record-425-drop>

Wisconsin doctors worry Medicaid work rules will create ethical, administrative burdens

Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary Kirsten Johnson told reporters on July 30 that the state needs additional guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services before it can build a verification system for the Medicaid work-requirement exemptions established in the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Beginning next year, Medicaid recipients ages 19 to 64 must complete 80 hours per month of work, schooling, or volunteering to retain coverage, with exemptions for people who are pregnant, live with children under 19, have a recognized disability, or are considered medically frail. Johnson said DHS plans to use existing medical billing records to verify inability to work, and that CMS will permit self-attestation during the first year. Scott Stewart, CEO of the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association, said billing claims systems are not designed to document functional impairment. Dr. Ken Schellhase of the Wisconsin Medical Society said most primary care physicians lack specialized training to make such capacity determinations, citing differences from formal Social Security disability evaluations.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/wisconsin-doctors-worry-medicaid-work-rules-will-create-ethical-administrative-burdens/>

Brown County survey highlights child care costs and shortages squeezing families

A joint survey conducted by Brown County United Way, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, and Achieve Brown County between April 28 and July 16 documents a structural child care gap and cost burden affecting Brown County families and employers. The county has approximately 13,700 children in need of child care but only 7,900 available slots, meaning 58 percent of children in need are receiving care. One quarter of survey respondents reported they lack access to the child care they need. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families reports the average annual cost of full-time infant care in center-based programs statewide is now \$17,400, an 8 percent increase from 2025. Survey respondents reported spending 10 to 30 percent of household income on child care. Brown County United Way Principal Strategist Sarah Inman and Achieve Brown County Communications and Engagement Manager Makayla Neinas said the

findings are intended to prompt policy action, including increased state investment in the child care system.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://wtaq.com/2026/08/21/brown-county-survey-highlights-child-care-costs-and-shortages-squeezing-families/>

Grant Funding Still Available for Child Care Providers in Wood County

The Wood County Child Care Task Force, through administering agency Childcaring, Inc., is offering grant funding sourced from American Rescue Plan Act dollars to expand regulated child care capacity in Wood County, with applications accepted through October 31, 2026. Three funding tiers are available: up to \$10,000 for individuals starting a licensed family child care program, up to \$5,000 for certified providers transitioning to licensure, and up to \$2,500 for licensed providers expanding capacity to serve up to 12 children. Eligible expenses include remodeling, furniture, indoor and outdoor play equipment, fencing, safety improvements, licensing fees, and staff incentive pay capped at 20 percent of the total grant request. Kelly Borchardt, Executive Director of Childcaring, Inc., is named as the program's administrative lead. Interested applicants can access materials at www.childcaring.org or contact Childcaring at 715-841-9490.

Source: WDLB 1450 AM Marshfield (Central/Northern) | <https://wdlbam.com/2026/08/21/22739/>

A guide to homelessness resources in northeast Wisconsin

An estimated 1,200 people are experiencing homelessness in northeast Wisconsin, a figure nonprofit leaders describe as a likely undercount, according to an investigative guide published August 20, 2026. The January 2026 point-in-time count found 560 individuals living in shelters or on the street in Brown County alone. In the 2024-25 school year, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction data show more than 20,000 Wisconsin students were classified as homeless, with 15,400 categorized as doubled up, a status that disqualifies them from most federal homeless assistance programs. HUD's four-category homelessness definition governs eligibility for federal aid, and the annual point-in-time count indirectly determines grant funding allocations by region. Jackie Baumgart, director of youth services for Foundations Health & Wholeness, identified a shortage of shelter capacity across rural counties the organization serves. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires each school district to designate a homeless liaison and provide transportation for students experiencing homelessness.

Source: PBS Wisconsin WHA21 (Northeastern) | <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/a-guide-to-homelessness-resources-in-northeast-wisconsin/>

HUD funding lags could hit rural Wisconsin hardest

The Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council, the only private fair housing organization in Wisconsin, has not received its third year of Fair Housing Initiative Program grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which was scheduled to begin in July 2026. Federal grants account for approximately 40 percent of the council's annual revenue, and the delay affects the organization's capacity to investigate housing discrimination. CEO Erika Sanders said HUD has also made organizations that recently received enforcement grants ineligible to apply for the next funding round. The council handles approximately 250 housing discrimination complaints per year statewide and conducts housing discrimination testing that no Wisconsin

government agency currently performs. Rural and small communities are identified as facing disproportionate impact due to fewer local resources. A federal judge blocked changes to grants administered by a pair of agencies, including HUD, in a separate legal proceeding reported the week of August 14, 2026. Fair housing groups are separately challenging the proposed federal grant program overhaul in court.

Source: WXPR 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Statewide) | <https://www.wxpr.org/wisconsin-news/2026-08-21/hud-funding-lags-could-hit-rural-wisconsin-hardest>

School Districts

Waunakee school district adds 2 referendums to November ballot

The Waunakee Community School District Board of Education voted unanimously to place two referendums on the November 2026 ballot. The first asks voters to approve \$10.5 million for operational expenses and employee pay through the 2030-31 school year. The second asks voters to approve \$97.5 million to demolish the older portion of Waunakee Community High School, construct additions to the campus, and renovate the school and athletic fields. The board voted last week, according to the article published August 18, 2026. The capital question would be the district's third such referendum in 15 years; voters approved a \$44.8 million referendum in 2014 and a \$175 million referendum in 2022. The new Heritage Elementary opened in 2024, and the new Waunakee Community Middle School, funded by the 2022 referendum, is scheduled to open within weeks. Both measures now proceed to the November ballot for voter determination.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/waunakee-school-district-adds-2-referendums-to-november-ballot/article_5f6f981a-e92a-4707-9e98-ee964c7c3972.html

Lake Mills school district voters to see operational referendum this fall

The Lake Mills Area School District board voted to place a \$2.9 million annual operating referendum on the November ballot, seeking that levy amount each year for four years. District Administrator Tonya Olson reported the district carried a \$705,000 deficit budget last year and projects a \$1.15 million deficit for the current year, covering shortfalls with fund balance draws. Olson said the district has avoided an operational referendum for nearly two decades through conservative budgeting but has exhausted available strategies. If approved, the district would prioritize teacher salary increases, technology updates, facility maintenance, and transportation funding. The referendum is separate from a capital referendum voters approved in November 2024, whose proceeds are restricted to capital projects. Olson said a failed referendum would likely force staffing reductions, increasing class sizes. The tax impact on property owners remains unclear pending fall budget variables.

Source: Waterloo/Marshall Courier (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/lake-mills-school-district-voters-to-see-operational-referendum-this-fall/article_8a48cd46-81de-4e80-90d1-a4a72ac2eab5.html

School district to use cash to pay down debt, smooth tax rate

The Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah Board of Education voted at its August 17 meeting to make an early partial payment on its referendum loan debt, a move the district projects will save approximately \$1,180,000 in interest costs over 20 years. The strategy is intended to smooth tax rate fluctuations

for district residents, avoiding pronounced drops and spikes over the loan's life. The article does not report the vote count, the specific dollar amount of the early payment, the outstanding principal balance, or the next scheduled board meeting at which further debt management action might be considered.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/school-district-to-use-cash-to-pay-down-debt-smooth-tax-rate/>

Board hears update on stadium and proposal

The Antigo School Board voted to place the football facility project into the capital improvement fund during its Monday, August 18, 2026, meeting, following a presentation by fundraising committee representatives Jerry Gillespie and Ray Diven. Point of Beginning Inc., the district's design and architectural firm, estimates construction costs for a proposed new athletic complex across from Antigo High School at \$8,225,588, including a contingency for turf replacement in 10 to 14 years. As of August 12, financial commitments total between \$377,755 and \$2,077,755, including \$77,755 in cash held at CoVantage Credit Union, two legally binding pledges totaling \$250,000, and \$1 million in paused corporate donations. The committee requested the board commit 50 percent of project costs from Fund 46. The board's approval directs current capital improvement funds toward repairing or replacing infrastructure at the existing Schofield Stadium, which has experienced failing field lights, a nonfunctional scoreboard, an inoperable PA system, and unsafe bleachers since at least September 2024. Primary construction is projected to begin summer 2027.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/board-hears-update-on-stadium-and-proposal/article_c062e96f-7bc8-4edb-8c0b-7f1b1e67f7fd.html

Koss questions how aquatic center issue has been handled

At the Antigo School Board's August 18, 2026, monthly meeting, Tom Koss, president of the Antigo School District Foundation, delivered public comment alleging the district is misappropriating school funds in its management of the Clara R. McKenna Aquatic Center. Koss stated that the district is charging maintenance and operational costs, including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and administrative functions, to Fund 80, the community education fund, rather than to Fund 10, the general fund, which he said is the practice in other Wisconsin districts he surveyed. He cited Wisconsin Statute 120.1310 as prohibiting use of Fund 80 for costs not directly incurred to operate community programs. Koss further alleged the district is in breach of its contract with the YMCA, citing the cancellation of an Aspirus therapy session as evidence. He recommended the board achieve statutory compliance immediately and ensure any Fund 46 capital improvement motion for a new stadium also allocates funds for aquatic center maintenance. No board vote was taken.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/koss-questions-how-aquatic-center-issue-has-been-handled/article_115f78ef-4f29-4818-a6f1-72a083dfa209.html

Board gives deadline to fund aquatic center

The Antigo School District Board of Education voted 5-4 on August 18, 2026, to require the Antigo School District Foundation to provide \$150,000 by August 31, 2026, or the Clara R. McKenna Aquatic Center will cease its community services operations. Board President Danny Pyeatt, Vice-

President Kirsten Mattmiller, Danny Nicholson, Melissa Cornelius, and Jean Adams voted in favor; Mike Parizek, Randy Myers, Angi Schreiber, and Jill Mattek Nelson voted against. The motion was amended by Adams to extend the deadline from August 24 to August 31 and to limit any closure to the community services portion of the pool rather than the entire facility, preserving school programming such as the swim team. In June, the board had approved a \$100,000 requisition from the Foundation rather than the original \$250,000 request. District administrators have indicated \$250,000 would cover bills through a Fund 80 vote anticipated at the budget hearing meeting in October. The next procedural step is the Foundation's response by the August 31 deadline.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/board-gives-deadline-to-fund-aquatic-center/article_31a90e57-3a43-4e57-9745-edcd9d07f7e6.html

Bid approved for Open Doors

The Stanley-Boyd Area School Board, meeting in a special session on Monday, August 17, in the high school library, approved a bid and construction plan for a new Open Doors building at North Broadway, awarding the contract to Heartland Construction of Cadott for a cost not to exceed \$306,000. The board received bids from Heartland Construction and Keith Schneider; a third bid submitted by Design Homes was withdrawn on project specs. The approved building will be 28 by 60 feet, slab on grade with in-floor heating; an alternate bid for a basement was considered but deemed unnecessary by the board. The board also reviewed progress on a separate main entrance renovation project, with metal framework, curbing, and roof decking underway as of August 17 and a handoff to the school anticipated in October. No construction timetable was established for the Open Doors building, with the stated intent to begin work as soon as possible.

Source: Stanley Republican (Western) | <https://stanleyrepublican.com/stories/bid-approved-for-open-doors,203047>

Hustisford looks at new computer components before 'catastrophic data loss'

The Hustisford School Board voted to approve an \$8,492 equipment purchase from Camera Corner Connecting Point to replace failing network infrastructure and prevent catastrophic data loss. Interim Superintendent Todd Bugnacki told the board that storage drives are currently failing, degrading network speed, recovery, storage, and functionality across all district operations, including finance and state and federal compliance functions. District IT specialist Fred Miller reported the equipment is eight years old, cannot be backed up, and that replacement parts are no longer available for hardware of that age. Bugnacki said the district worked with its vendor for two months to identify a solution and determined leasing was not an option due to the district's current financial status. Board President Steven Weinheimer offered to source servers from his own department for backup storage, but Bugnacki stated the direct purchase was the only option to avoid complete network failure. No further procedural steps were reported following the board's approval.

Source: Watertown Daily Times (South Central) | https://www.wdtimes.com/news/local/hustisford-looks-at-new-computer-components-before-catastrophic-data-loss/article_07544055-fd6f-4f18-a753-badd6b08c40a.html

Bob Lloyd welcomed as new Black Hawk Superintendent

The Black Hawk School District, serving the communities of Browntown, Gratiot, Martintown, South Wayne, Wiota, and Woodford, has appointed Bob Lloyd as its new Superintendent. Lloyd

previously served as Superintendent of the Lomira School District, where he worked with that district's Board of Education on fiscal responsibility and student achievement initiatives. He holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Marian University and completed his Superintendent Licensure at Cardinal Stritch University. Before moving into administration, Lloyd served as an elementary educator in Fond du Lac and Lomira. Lloyd will be introduced to the public at an Open House scheduled for August 26, running from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., with the first day of school set for September 1.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/bob-lloyd-welcomed-as-new-black-hawk-superintendent/>

Blue Door Academy expands before- and after-school care to 10 Wauwatosa schools

The Wauwatosa School Board voted in May to approve a letter of intent to partner with Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee's Blue Door Academy as the district's before- and after-school care provider, replacing Right at School, whose contract was terminated effective June 11 following confirmed incidents of physically aggressive behavior by provider employees toward students at Roosevelt and Eisenhower elementary schools. Wauwatosa police investigated those incidents and closed the cases without pursuing charges. Blue Door Academy, originally piloted at Underwood Elementary, will expand to 10 Wauwatosa schools beginning September 1 for the 2026-27 school year, providing before-school care, after-school care, and Junior Kindergarten wraparound care for students in JK through fifth grade. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee describes this as the largest Blue Door Academy footprint nationwide. Superintendent Dr. Demond Means oversees the district. The program's curriculum rotates on a nine-week cycle, with student showcases at the end of each cycle.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/milwaukee-tonight/blue-door-academy-expands-before-and-after-school-care-to-10-wauwatosa-schools>

MMSD announces changes to social media, website access

The Madison Metropolitan School District has implemented new restrictions on app and website access for the 2026-27 school year. Beginning this year, students in pre-K through 8th grade are blocked from accessing YouTube on school-issued devices unless a teacher has embedded the video directly in Google Classroom or Google Slides. Students in that grade range are also prohibited from accessing social media platforms on school devices. A new addition this year extends the social media block to users on the MMSD Guest network, who will be unable to access social media sites during school hours. The article does not report a formal board vote, resolution identifier, or dollar figure associated with the policy changes.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/22/mmsd-announces-changes-social-media-website-access/>

What would a One City/MMSD partnership mean for Madison?

The Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education voted 6-0 on Wednesday, August 20, 2026, to open the charter application process for One City Schools, with one board member absent. The vote allows district staff and One City to collaborate on a detailed proposal that could convert One City from an independently operating public charter school to a district-authorized charter school under MMSD. One City currently serves more than 300 students and receives

\$12,797 per pupil in state funding, while still needing to raise approximately \$5 million annually, representing 40 to 50 percent of its budget, because it does not receive local property tax revenue. Board President Savion Castro stated the vote only opened the application process and that the financial arrangement has not been finalized. One City is requesting MMSD waive its standard two-year charter application timeline in favor of one year, citing its existing operations. District administrators will review that timeline request, and the board is expected to vote on a final decision in spring 2027.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/08/21/what-would-one-citymmsd-partnership-mean-madison/>

Madison schools superintendent's next test: More students, better results

The Madison Metropolitan School District, Wisconsin's second-largest school district, is entering Superintendent Joe Gothard's third year of leadership amid enrollment decline and persistent academic achievement gaps. The district has conducted a \$100,000 branding overhaul and launched a review of school attendance boundaries under Gothard's direction. State test results show approximately a 60-percentage-point gap between the share of Black and white students meeting grade-level expectations in both reading and math. The most recent Stanford Education Scorecard places Madison students half a grade level below the state average in reading and a full grade level below in math. The district has adopted a new five-year strategic plan, developed under Gothard's direction, intended to address student achievement and structural challenges. Former Madison School Board President James Howard noted that improving achievement outcomes will be the measure of success for the district's educational spending. No specific vote counts, dollar figures tied to the strategic plan, or implementation timelines were reported in the article.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/education/madison-schools-superintendents-next-test-more-students-better-results/article_962600ae-580c-4fce-91fe-c3b91b59d091.html

Local leaders discuss education funding

A cross-district coalition representing 13 school districts in southern Wisconsin held its second meeting on August 18 at Monroe High School to advance discussions on reforming Wisconsin's public school funding system. Participants included school superintendents, business administrators, school board members, and community members. The group's first meeting occurred in June and featured expert speakers on funding models in other states. Jim Curran, President of the Monroe Board of Education, said the current funding system is not working and that solutions exist that would not pit rural districts such as Monroe, New Glarus, and Evansville against Milwaukee. The August 18 session focused on how the group can inform political candidates and policymakers about shared challenges and potential solutions. The group has not yet formalized its organizational structure or name and expects to do so in the coming weeks. It plans to engage with candidates seeking elected office over the next several months.

Source: Monroe Times (South Central) | <https://themonroetimes.com/local-news/local-leaders-discuss-education-funding/>

US Education Department investigates Milwaukee Public Schools over race-conscious discipline practices

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights opened an investigation into Milwaukee Public Schools on Tuesday, notifying the district that it may be violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act by using race as a factor in student discipline decisions. MPS media relations manager Stephen Davis confirmed the district received the notice Tuesday morning but said it will need additional information from the department before responding. The department simultaneously issued a Dear Colleague Letter reinterpreting existing law to require facially neutral, even-handed discipline policies regardless of statistical racial disparities. MPS is one of only two districts under investigation nationally, the other in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction data from the 2024-25 school year show Black students represented 78 percent of MPS suspensions and 86 percent of expulsions while accounting for 54 percent of discipline incidents. The Office for Civil Rights previously investigated MPS disciplinary practices beginning before 2018, finding over 100 instances in a two-year span where Black students were expelled for infractions that resulted in suspension for white students.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Southeastern) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/milwaukee-public-schools-disciplinary-practices-race-us-education-department-investigation/>

Private schools where 100% of students use vouchers barely face any oversight

An investigation documented that 39 Wisconsin private schools received 100 percent of their tuition revenue from state voucher programs during the most recent school year, collectively educating 7,923 children and drawing approximately \$87 million in public funds while operating under fewer accountability requirements than public schools. Atlas Preparatory Academy in Milwaukee received more than \$4.3 million in voucher funding for 357 K-12 students while earning the state's lowest performance rating, one star or fails to meet expectations, on Wisconsin's school report card. The school's board chair, who also served as a school administrator, received compensation exceeding \$150,000 in 2024; that dual role is prohibited at Wisconsin public schools but faces no equivalent restriction at private schools. Wisconsin law requires voucher schools to hold at least two parent-board meetings annually but does not require those meetings to be open to the general public. Independent financial audits are required by the state, but financial sanctions or closure authority for low-performing schools remain absent.

Source: WFHR 1320 AM Wisconsin Rapids (Statewide) | <https://www.wfhr.com/news/2026/08/17/private-schools-where-100-of-students-use-vouchers-barely-face-any-oversight>

Rice Lake teacher hired as principal months after Title IX sexual harassment investigation

The Rice Lake Area School District completed a Title IX grievance process against Tyler Moore, a physical education teacher and athletic development coordinator at Rice Lake High School, following a complaint filed June 10, 2025, by the district's director of special education and pupil services on behalf of a minor student. Investigator Molly M. Fischl of Minneapolis firm Squires, Waldspurger & Mace found a preponderance of evidence that Moore made inappropriate physical contact with the student during an unofficial athletic training session on May 21, 2025. Decision-maker Matthew Bell of BoardmanClark, LLP filed his determination on October 31, 2025, also finding a preponderance of evidence supporting that finding. School Resource Officer Andrew Jondreau investigated and interviewed 14 students and a football coach; no criminal charges

were filed. Moore subsequently resigned from the district. Within months of his resignation, Moore was hired as principal of a local nondenominational Christian school serving 4-year-old kindergarten through sixth grade.

Source: Rice Lake Chronotype (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/rice_lake_chronotype/news/rice-lake-teacher-hired-as-principal-months-after-title-ix-sexual-harassment-investigation/article_cdf71df9-60e5-4506-929e-fca6903bec44.html

MPSD Employee Arrested for Grooming a Student for Sexual Activity

The Manitowoc Public School District placed Special Education Paraprofessional Courtney A. Haupt, age 32, on unpaid administrative leave following her arrest on August 20, 2026, on charges of Grooming of a Child for Sexual Activity and Sexual Misconduct by School Staff. The district received a report of potentially inappropriate conduct involving a 15-year-old student earlier in August, prompting a Manitowoc Police Department investigation that led to the arrest. A court set cash bail at \$10,000 with conditions including no contact with the victim, his parents, or any individual between the ages of 12 and 17. The leave status is pending the conclusion of the investigation. Haupt is scheduled to make her initial court appearance on Monday, August 24, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

Source: Seehafer News (Northeastern) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/08/21/mpsd-employee-arrested-for-grooming-a-student-for-sexual-activity/>

DPI hopes federal grant will help stop 'revolving door' of Wisconsin special education teachers

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction announced on August 17 that it was awarded a \$10.5 million federal grant to address a shortage of special education teachers statewide. The grant will fund the Special Education Teacher Apprenticeship and Induction Retention System over five years, expanding a registered learn-while-you-earn apprenticeship model, previously limited to elementary and middle school educators, into special education for the first time. An April DPI report found that fewer than half of Wisconsin's special education teachers remain in the profession after eight years. Grant author and DPI education development consultant Barbara Van Haren said resources will target first-year teachers and their mentors, with program coordination running through the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Van Haren identified rural districts as particularly affected, citing limited access to higher education and inadequate infrastructure for mentorship and release time. No vote count or specific next procedural step was reported; implementation is set to unfold across the five-year grant period.

Source: WPR News Madison (Statewide) (Statewide) | <https://www.wpr.org/news/dpi-federal-grant-revolving-door-wisconsin-special-education-teachers>

State-Local Interface

UW system requests \$730 million to fund 2-year tuition freeze, AI infrastructure

The Universities of Wisconsin submitted a \$730 million two-year budget request to the state Legislature, released Monday, August 18, 2026, that includes a pledge to freeze undergraduate in-state tuition for the 2027-28 and 2028-29 academic years contingent on the Legislature approving \$190 million of that total. The full request allocates \$347 million in the first budget year and \$383

million in the second. If funded, the Board of Regents would also cap any tuition increases in the 2029-31 biennium at the rate of inflation. The request includes \$45 million for AI infrastructure covering hardware, software, networking, and staff; \$35 million to raise starting salaries; \$33 million for the Wisconsin Work & Learn tuition-coverage program; \$240 million for workforce and economic competitiveness; and \$115 million for healthcare education expansion. UW Regent President Kyle Weatherly announced the proposal. During the 2025-27 cycle, the Legislature approved \$245 million of a requested \$855 million increase.

Source: Chippewa Herald (Statewide) | https://chippewa.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_c272e6ae-802c-54a1-a66a-beef17059d75.html

UW Regents back tuition freeze, \$2 billion in building projects

The UW Board of Regents unanimously approved the Universities of Wisconsin's operating and capital budget requests on Thursday, August 21, 2026, at a meeting held at UW-Madison. The capital budget includes more than \$2 billion in projects, with top requests including demolition of UW-Madison's Mosse Humanities Building, constructed in 1969, at a cost of \$465.5 million, of which the system requests \$416.7 million in state funds and pledges \$48.8 million from donations. The proposed \$730 million operating budget would freeze resident tuition for two years and launch a program covering partial tuition for working students. The system exhausted its small-project funds for the current biennium in July. Additional capital priorities include new construction at UW-Milwaukee and UW-River Falls and a first new UW-Madison dormitory in more than a decade, driven by 114 percent occupancy. The approved proposals advance next to the governor and then the Legislature for consideration in the 2027-29 biennial budget negotiations beginning after the November election.

Source: WiscNews (Statewide) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_64a2de74-4767-5e4c-86f4-83c8a591dcbf.html

Oracle drops lawsuit challenging Wisconsin data center credit rules

Oracle filed a motion to voluntarily dismiss its lawsuit against the Wisconsin Public Service Commission in Ozaukee County Circuit Court on Monday, ending a legal challenge the company initiated in June 2025. The PSC's credit rating rules, approved in May 2025 as part of a specialized rate structure for We Energies' largest data center customers, require operators with credit ratings below A- to post collateral in cash or lines of credit to shield ratepayers from cost exposure if a developer becomes insolvent. Oracle's credit rating stood at BBB when the rules were approved and was downgraded by S&P Global Ratings to BBB- on July 9, a level that could require the company to pay over \$100 million per year in financial security payments. Separately, the PSC voted last week to require American Transmission Company to restart its six-month application process to build transmission infrastructure connecting the Port Washington data center campus by a December 2027 deadline.

Source: Wisconsin Watch (Statewide) | <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2026/08/oracle-drops-lawsuit-challenging-wisconsin-data-center-credit-rules/>

Wisconsin regulators send American Transmission Company back to the drawing board on data center connection project

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission voted August 6 to reject American Transmission Company's pending application to build grid infrastructure connecting the Port Washington data center to the electrical grid, ordering ATC to resubmit a revised application. ATC's initial filing, submitted in September 2024, outlined a more than \$1.3 billion infrastructure package including a high-voltage transmission line and five new substations spanning Fond du Lac, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, and Washington counties, with a target completion date of December 2027. PSC Chair Summer Strand characterized the action as a reasonable reset following repeated design revisions ATC made across six months of filings. PSC Environmental Affairs Coordinator Adam Ingwell and Administrative Law Judge Michael Newmark both cited the volume of undifferentiated revisions as creating burdens on staff and the public. The Wisconsin Citizens Utility Board flagged project cost as a moving target due to ongoing route changes and new bypass lines. Public comment meetings previously scheduled for the week of July 24 were canceled following the decision. Once ATC resubmits, proposed routes may differ from those originally filed.

Source: Plymouth Review (Statewide) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/wisconsin-regulators-send-american-transmission-company-back-to-the-drawing-board-on-data-center-connection-project/>

Wisconsin Public Service Commission Looking For Comments On Strategic Energy Assessment

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission is soliciting public input on its biannual Strategic Energy Assessment, a technical analysis evaluating Wisconsin's current and future electricity supply. Ten electric providers operating in Wisconsin submitted historical and forecast electric data as part of the assessment, covering topics including carbon dioxide emission reduction goals, utility resource planning, demand response offerings, and transmission cost trends. The commission held a virtual public hearing on August 20, 2026, and is accepting written public comments through September 28, 2026. The assessment also includes analysis of customer affordability measures undertaken by the commission. Additional information is available at psc.wi.gov.

Source: Seehafer News (Statewide) | <https://www.seehafernews.com/2026/08/22/wisconsin-public-service-commission-looking-for-comments-on-strategic-energy-assessment/>

Lawmakers weigh in on massive transmission line projects

Two proposed high-voltage transmission line projects crossing southern Wisconsin have drawn legislative scrutiny ahead of a series of community open houses scheduled for late August 2026. The BECI project, proposed by Midcontinent Grid Solutions, would span 190 miles across nine counties in south-central Wisconsin; it connects to the MariBell Transmission Project, which covers 140 miles beginning in Marion, Minnesota. State Sen. Brad Pfaff introduced legislation this session that would direct the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to prioritize siting along existing highway and railroad corridors or underground routing for large transmission projects, but the bill did not advance before the session ended. Pfaff stated he intends to reintroduce it in the next legislative session. The PSC holds final authority over both project approvals, and its commissioners are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/lawmakers-weigh-in-on-massive-transmission-line-projects/article_3fb3edea-dbc6-4c77-9bdb-4afb1178e413.html

Bad River Band, others to argue against Line 5 reroute permit

Attorneys for the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians and allied environmental groups presented oral arguments August 19, 2026, at the Bayfield County Courthouse challenging permits for Enbridge's 41-mile reroute of Line 5 in northern Wisconsin, with additional viewing held at the Iron County Courthouse. The groups' challenge is separate from their concurrent contest of permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Construction on the reroute began in February 2026 following initial judicial permit approval, but a stay was subsequently placed on four waterway crossings before being lifted one week before the hearing. During construction, more than 1,600 gallons of drilling fluid spilled into Iron County wetlands. The groups assert the reroute crosses at least 186 waterways and 101 acres of high-quality wetlands draining into Lake Superior and that the pipeline will surround the Band's reservation on three sides, affecting tribal water quality standards and treaty rights. No ruling date was reported.

Source: Phillips Price County Review (Statewide) | https://apg-wi.com/news/state/bad-river-band-others-to-argue-against-line-5-reroute-permit/article_933a3acb-2d36-5dd1-bf47-bb2c4c0eb906.html

Wisconsin's AG is suing prediction markets. One is suing him back

Ludlow Exchange, operator of the prediction market Novig, filed a federal lawsuit last week against Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul and Wisconsin Department of Administration Gaming Administrator John Dille, seeking an injunction to block the state from applying its gambling laws to Novig's operations in Wisconsin. The suit argues that Novig's event contracts fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and that Wisconsin law is therefore preempted by federal law. Kaul had previously filed suit against prediction markets Polymarket and Kalshi in Dane County, asserting that event contracts are legally indistinguishable from sports betting; that case has since moved to federal court. The CFTC has separately asked a federal judge for a permanent injunction blocking Kaul's suit, alleging it violates the U.S. Constitution's Supremacy Clause. Wisconsin law permits Native American tribes holding gaming compacts to operate sportsbooks, and a law signed earlier in 2026 extended that framework to mobile sports betting with servers located on tribal lands. A federal judge must rule on the injunction request.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/wisconsins-ag-is-suing-prediction-markets-one-is-suing-him-back/article_1523bd84-6e3d-4c56-b643-6fd5fe673e37.html

Wisconsin DNR seeks to prorate wolf damage claims amid potential funding shortfall

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board voted to authorize the Department of Natural Resources to draft regulations that would prioritize and prorate payments for wolf depredation claims, with board member Doug Cox abstaining. The action is driven by a potential funding shortfall as wolf damage claims have risen from roughly \$100,000 in 2022 to nearly \$323,000 in 2024, more than doubling over that period; the state has paid a total of \$3.9 million in claims since 1985. The DNR relies on up to \$500,000 annually in state matching funds for wolf claim investigation and compensation, drawn from the Natural Heritage Conservation Bureau's \$8.4 million budget, which also faces an \$873,000 reduction tied to a broader \$16 million fish and wildlife account

shortfall. An April DNR request for additional wolf depredation funding received no legislative action. The board-approved authorization permits deferring payments until the end of June 2027. The DNR plans to bring an emergency rule before the board this fall, with a permanent rule to follow.

Source: WXPB 91.7 FM Rhinelander (Statewide) | <https://www.wxpr.org/energy-environment/2026-08-21/wisconsin-dnr-seeks-to-prorate-wolf-damage-claims-amid-potential-funding-shortfall>

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.
