

GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2010

WHEN THE CHAIN BREAKS

Activists look to tighten trailer regulations after fatal crash on U.S. 41 last month

BY CHARLES DAVIS
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The death of a 19-year-old University of Wisconsin-Green Bay student on U.S. 41 last month has galvanized activists who think stricter trailer safety regulations would have prevented the tragedy.

Wisconsin ranks No. 11 nationally in reported deaths involving passenger cars towing trailers, according to the National Highway Safety Administration. The state reported 377 deaths and more than 11,000 injuries from 1975 to 2008.



Emergency crews work at the scene of a fatal accident along U.S. 41 that killed Whitney Radder of Kiel on April 20 in Howard. **Evan Siegle/Press-Gazette**

In the past five years, citations were issued in 117 trailer accidents throughout Wisconsin, said Dennis Hughes, chief of safety programs for the state Department of Transportation.

Statewide, there are nearly 125,000 crashes a year, he said.

"It's a relatively rare event, but it does happen. And as the recent accident shows, it can have tragic consequences," Hughes said.

Whitney Radder of Kiel was killed April 20 when a trailer fell off a pickup and crashed into her car on U.S. 41 in Howard. Radder was returning to campus from a teaching assignment at Franklin Middle School in Green Bay.

The pickup driver, James D. Mc-

Dermid, 59, of Abrams, was cited for towing with improper safety chains and having couplings, or hitches, that failed to meet standards. Both citations total \$401. No criminal charges have been filed, and the investigation is ongoing.

State Sen. Dave Hansen, D-Green Bay, said he is looking into drafting a bill by January for tighter trailer regulations.

"We have to look at our ability to protect people from this sort of accident," Hansen said.

The most common citation — issued in more than 50 percent of accidents — was for couplings failing to meet standards, according to the National Highway Safety Administration. It's reported accidents include semi and utility trailers.



Radder

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TRAILER SAFETY TIPS

- Criss-cross safety chains onto bumper or frame of vehicle.
- Ensure hitches and couplers aren't rusty and are in good condition.
- Practice driving the trailer before going onto roads.
- Allow extra stopping distance due to extra weight of trailer.
- Check that trailer lights and brakes work properly.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Brown Co. home sales are on the rebound

Realtors say economic conditions improving

BY RICHARD RYMAN
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Existing home sales in Brown County were 21.6 percent higher in the first three months of 2010 than last year, better than across the state or the nation.

That was the largest increase for the number of homes sold in the state. The Wisconsin Realtors Association said Tuesday that Brown County tallied 405 sales, compared with 333 last year. Kenosha (325 sales, 45.1 percent more), Racine (347 sales, 26.2 percent) and Dane (847 sales, 19 percent) had similar results.

Northeastern Wisconsin Realtors said the recently elapsed federal incentive program was helpful, but other factors are driving improved sales, too.

"We are starting to see a little bit of increase in employment, and that's helping," said Chuck Peeters, president of the real estate division of Coldwell Banker The Real Estate Group Inc., Appleton, which has offices in 17 counties.

Stacie Maus-Martens, an owner of Resource 1 Realty, De Pere, said interest rates are at 5 percent or less.

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Green Bay panel calls for photo ID at ballot box

The measure is meant to curtail voter fraud

BY SCOTT WILLIAMS
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Confronted with evidence of Green Bay's first-ever known cases of voter fraud, a City Council committee moved Tuesday to support a statewide requirement for photo identification at the ballot box.

The action means Green Bay might add its voice to the state capital debate about whether a mandatory photo ID would curtail election fraud or impede voter turnout.

It comes one day after state election officials quashed a push for voluntary photo ID out of concern that such a practice would disenfranchise certain voters.

Alderman Patrick Buckley joined others on the council's Finance Committee in calling for a city resolution that urges state lawmakers to make voter

► See Fraud, A-2

BUSINESS ECONOMY

Tourism industry expects upturn in 2010

Tourism income in Brown County was down 12.3 percent in 2009, but an improving economy and several big events may boost spending this year. **READ MORE » A-6**



The tall ships return in August.

SPORTS HOCKEY

Clark Cup finals Game 5 tonight at Resch Center

With the best-of-five United States Hockey League championship series tied 2-2, the Green Bay Gamblers host Fargo in Game 5 at what could be a sold-out Resch Center. **READ MORE » B-1**



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