

February Member Clips

ATC

- Natural areas a concern with preferred route for data center transmission lines
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- Great Lakes Neighbors United hosts educational session about data centers
- County seeks to become party before PSC on data center transmission lines

Cedarburg

- Local utility marks 125 years of local service

Columbus

- Garage, vehicles total loss in Columbus fire

Eagle River

- Eagle River sludge tank fills, options shrink

Florence

- Career day at Florence County High School
- Florence energy news consumer information

Hartford

- Electrifying presentation, Hartford Utilities teaches electrical safety during Lincoln visit
- Hartford Utilities second holiday food drive a success
- Putting energy into saving energy and money

Jefferson

- Supervisors approve lighting, sustainable transportation
- County board approves lighting, sustainable transportation

Kaukauna

- Kaukauna City hydroelectric plan getting wall stabilization and concrete repairs
- 4 people hurt in 2-vehicle crash in Outagamie County
- \$12.5 M for area projects stalled

Maquoketa

- Local power grid helps states overwhelmed by severe weather
- Presentation in Maquoketa will discuss data centers

Mount Horeb

- Department heads provide updates

New London

- New London Utilities Board meets

River Falls

- Tech entrepreneur Jeff Cernohous to speak at UW-River Falls Feb. 18
- Roger Neil DeLong, of River Falls, passed away

Waupaun

- Fire damages Waupun home and displaces two residents

'It ruins the neighborhood'

Natural areas a concern with preferred route for data center transmission lines

By Christina Luick
cluick@conley.net.com
262-224-4166

OZAUKEE COUNTY — Several organizations are voicing concerns with the preferred and preferred contingent transmission line routes for the data center in Port Washington, saying that they would have negative impacts on natural preserves and parks in Ozaukee County.

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It will be located on a nearly 700-acre parcel in northern Port Washington. The Lighthouse phase, which is one piece of the 1,900-acre property, is estimated to open in 2028.

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Photo courtesy of Restoring Lands

County Line Preserve, pictured, is one of the natural areas that will be disturbed by the preferred route for transmission lines needed to support the Port Washington data center.

Director of Ozaukee County Planning & Parks Department Andrew Struck said both the preferred and preferred contingent routes are concerning to the county. The Ozaukee County Board approved a resolution that supports ATC's alternate transmission route, which uses existing transmission corridors and rights-of-way.

Struck said the preferred contingent route specifically would have significant negative impacts to the county park system, in particular Hawthorne Hills County Park.

Hawthorne Hills Park is approximately 57 acres of mostly undeveloped woodland located at 4880 Highway I, just north of the park is Pioneer Village, a collection of over 24 restored buildings and structures dating from the 1840s to the early 1900s.

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From A01

Lines

From Page 1A

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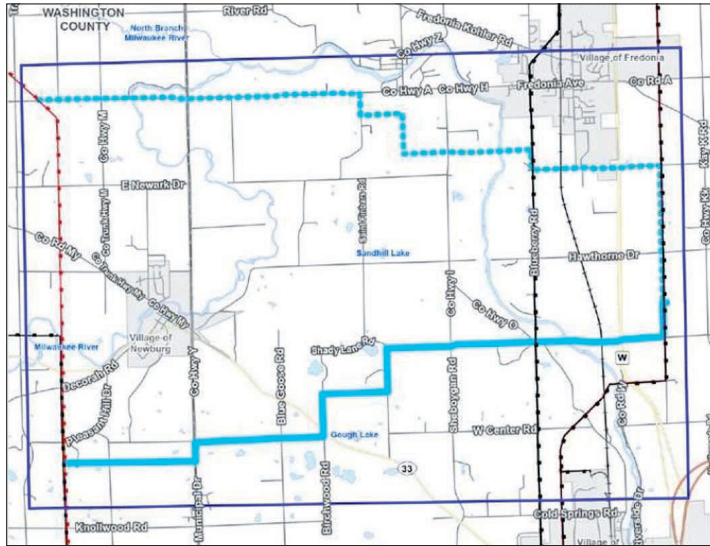
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The map shows the contingent preferred route (blue dashed line) and the part of the preferred route (blue solid line) that it could replace.

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However, FCOB President Jim Reinartz said it would have a "devastating" impact by going through Center Lane and Country Line preserves, owned by Restoring Lands, formerly the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust.

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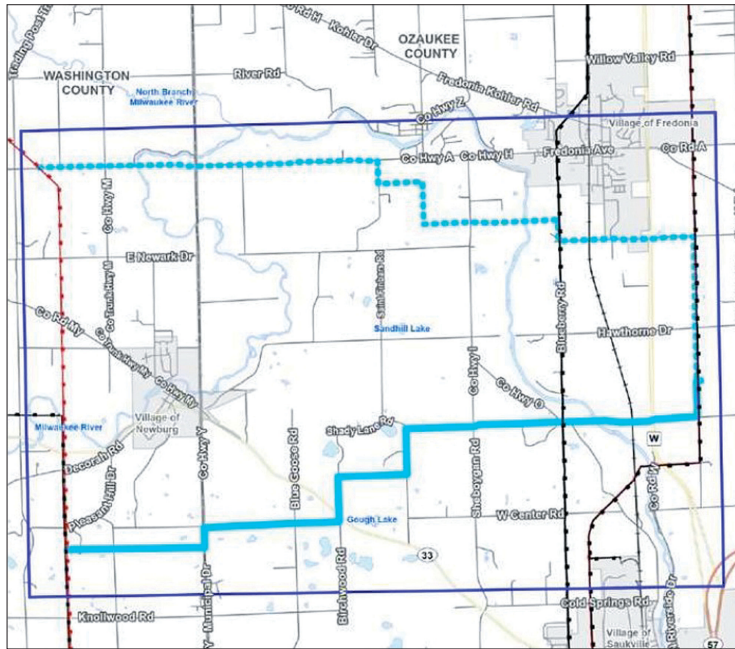
See LINES, PAGE 6A



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Lines

From Page 1A

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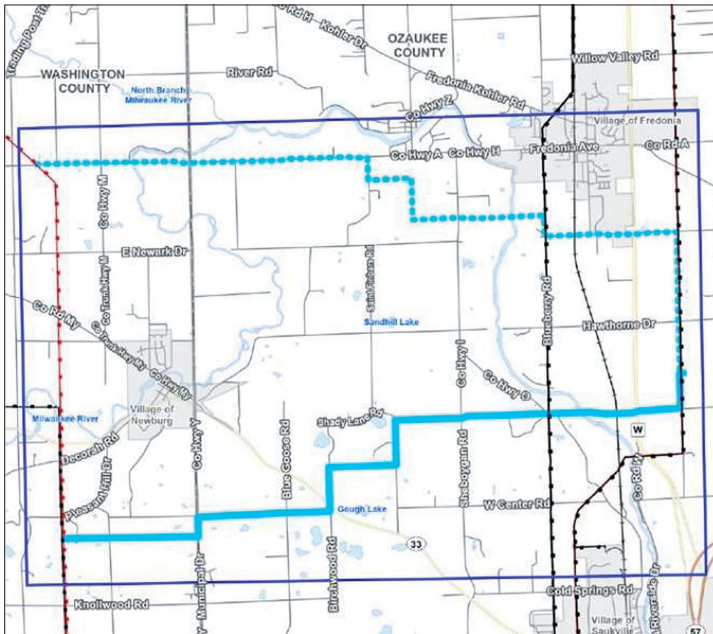
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Great Lakes Neighbors United hosts educational session about data centers

Comedian Charlie Berens among speakers in Port Washington

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Charley Hanney/Conley Media

Comedian Charlie Berens, who has been a vocal data center critic, was among the speakers Wednesday at Lepanto Banquet Hall in Port Washington. More than 100 people attended the educational event hosted by Great Lakes Neighbors United.

By Charley Hanney
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PORT WASHINGTON — Despite a controversial data center already breaking ground, a group that has been battling the city of Port Washington against the multibillion-dollar tech center hosted an educational session to inform the public of what could be looming.

Hundreds of residents gathered at Lepanto Banquet Hall Wednesday to hear from Great Lakes Neighbors United and several panelists regarding the possible community and

regional impacts of hyperscale AI data centers. Speakers included Paula Pintar of the Wisconsin Department of Public Health, retired technology executive Prescott Balch, as well as comedian Charlie Berens, who has been using his platform to actively speak out against these complexes.

“I’ve been told by some of you to stick to comedy, and I would be happy to stick with comedy as soon as our politicians stick with policy,” Berens said. “And I’m not saying we can’t build the future, but we have to be smart about it because what good is the future without our freedom?”

Port Washington’s nearly 1,900-acre Vantage data center project that was approved in November will be occupied by OpenAI and Oracle and located west of Interstate 43, east of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, north of Highland Lane and south of Dixie Road. The tax incremental district created for it is expected to generate sufficient tax increment to pay all project costs within 18 of its allowable 20 years, and approximately \$2.11 billion is estimated to result from the new improvements, according to the TID project plan.

See **DATA CENTER**, PAGE 6A

Waukesha, The Freeman

Data center

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Great Lakes Neighbors United organizers said the event was about empowering the community and finding out more about key concerns and questions regarding the data center, an aspect to the project they and many other residents felt was lacking since it was approved. The group has also begun a recall process for Port Washington Mayor Ted Neitzke IV, needing 1,600 signatures by Monday to prompt a recall election.



State law requires signatures equal to or greater than 25% of a community's votes in the last governor's election to prompt this type of election.

"This project happened so fast that people didn't really have time to educate themselves on some of the negatives," Great Lakes Neighbors United member Michael Beaster said during a press conference in December.

Those negatives include costly utility upgrades and additional pressure on the state's water infrastructure, which Milwaukee Riverkeeper's Cheryl Nenn noted will not only affect Port Washington, but other communities as well.

"We also have very serious concerns about the ATC electric transmission that are being proposed for this project ... regardless of the alternative that they pick, it would harm dozens of streams in wetlands, regardless of what's picked there," Nenn told the crowd. "Water efficiency and sustainability standards should be required, including water conservation plans for all of these facilities ... they (government) should be forthcoming with the amount of water and energy that they're using and also the impacts to the community."



Charley Hanney/Conley Media

More than 100 people attended an educational event hosted by Great Lakes Neighbors United on data centers Wednesday at Lepanto Banquet Hall in Port Washington.



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WASHINGTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

County seeks to become party before PSC on data center transmission lines

Receives update on UWM-WC sale

By Grayson Sewell
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262-306-5043

WEST BEND — The Washington County Executive Committee received two updates Wednesday from County Attorney Brad Stern pertaining to the American Transmission Company's proposal before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to create new power lines for the data center being built in Port Washington and the sale of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Washington County campus.

In December 2025, the Washington County Board approved an advisory resolution that supported the use of existing transmission lines to power the new Vantage Data Center in Port Washington instead of the ATC's "preferred power route" or "preferred contingent route," which would involve the construction of new transmission lines in Washington County, according to Stern.

Once the PSC received the advisory resolution, it sent notice to the county that it could file a motion to become an interested party in the application process from the ATC. Although the county received the notice one day before a motion needed to be filed, Stern said the county was able to do so.

"To be clear, it's a proceeding before the Public Service Commission, not a court of law, not an administrative law judge at this point," said Stern. "It was ATC's application before the PSC to establish where those transmission lines are going to run. We would like to see them continue along the existing path. ... It would serve the county well (to be a part of the process) because the comment that we provided the PSC via the resolution that was adopted would sit in that basket, but probably never really be seen by any of the commissioners."

According to Stern, potentially "having a seat at the table" is the best bet for the county to have its, and the community's, voices heard by the PSC about their preference in transmission line use for the data center.

"So, it's wise for us to be at the table because we may be able to sway this thing and may be able to sway it in our favor, meaning the county's favor," said Stern. "Our community's favor."

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Updates

From Page 1A

The county's motion is sitting before the PSC, but it is unknown when it will be considered, according to Stern, though he did say Washington County would likely become involved in the proceedings.

"There are dozens of these requests to intervene, and so it could very well be that it takes weeks for them to take these up and decide," said Stern. "We're not guaranteed to be in, but again, given who we are, it does look pretty likely that we will be allowed in, and once we're in, then we can decide how involved we want to become."

According to Stern, the county could demand discovery and take depositions, though he said that would be "overkill."

"We probably don't want to do that, but the option would be there," said Stern. "Or, we could just show up the day of the hearing and present somebody to speak before the PSC."

He added that the county will also have to decide if it wants to only focus on the transmission lines, or to also talk about the substation that would be built in the Town of Jackson as part of the project.

"Is that something we want to weigh in on, as well? We haven't considered that ... and I don't know what the town's position is on that," said Stern. "But again, having a seat at the table allows us the opportunity potentially to take that up."

Supervisor Denis Kelling said it was a "slam dunk" that the county is trying to get involved in the PSC process.

"It certainly was presented by the board as the will of the board on behalf of the people that we do want them to follow the existing lines," said Kelling. "So, I strongly encourage you to continue that fight."

UWM-WC sale update

Stern also gave the executive

committee an update on the sale of UWM-WC to Ozaukee Christian School, now known as Faith Ridge, and the Cedar Lakes Conservation Foundation.

The county entered into an agreement to sell the former UWM-WC campus to the two organizations, with the CLCF purchasing 60 acres of the campus to conserve and OCS purchasing 20 acres of the campus and the UWM-WC building for \$3 million in August.

"I'm very pleased to report this afternoon that the activity surrounding the sale has increased significantly, especially in the last 24 hours or so," said Stern.

According to Stern, Washington County Board Chair Jeff Schleif signed the agreement for the county to buy out West Bend's 26% stake in the UWM-WC property, and it had been sent to West Bend City Administrator Jesse Thyges to sign it, as well.

"The takeaway from that is that we've reached an agreement on all points with the city, and now it's a matter of just finalizing the paperwork," said Stern. "The certified survey map was also signed today by the chairman (Schleif.) It's back in the city's hands, right now they're preparing the necessary easement documents. Those should end up being recorded we figure by Monday or Tuesday next week."

He added that the county will be scheduling a closing date for the sale between the county and city soon, and that it is well underway to completion.

As for the sale to Faith Ridge (formerly OCS), Stern said that its attorney reviewed the agreement with the county and sent it back with minor tweaks.

"We received those things," said Stern. "We had a couple of minor suggestions, the language that they proposed, and the agreement was sent back to them in the last couple of days, but again, we're very, very close to finalizing that sale, as well."

"So, as I stand here today, I think there's every reason to be encouraged about where we're at."

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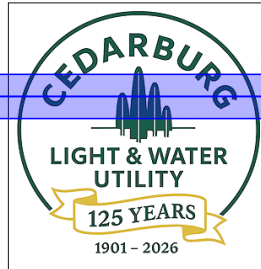


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CEDARBURG LIGHT & WATER

Local utility marks 125 years of local service

By Christina Luick
cluick@conley.net.com
262-224-4166



CEDARBURG — Cedarburg Light & Water Utility is celebrating 125 years of providing electric and water service to the Cedarburg community.

Since 1901, the utility has served more than 7,000 homes and businesses with a focus on dependable service, long-term planning and keeping rates affordable, according to a CL&W press release. Unlike investor-owned utilities, CL&W is owned by the community it serves. Local ownership means decisions are made in Cedarburg, dollars stay in Cedarburg and rates are designed to recover costs rather than generate profits for shareholders.

“Because decisions are made here in Cedarburg, we can balance affordability with reliability in a way that actually works for our customers,” said CL&W General Manager Karsten Huse. “That local connection is our advantage.”

On Feb. 27, 1901, the Common Council at the time passed an ordinance to erect, maintain and operate an electric plant, according to the CL&W.

The first arc lamp was hung over the intersection at Bridge Street and Washington Avenue the following

See CL&W, PAGE 6A



Photo courtesy of Cedarburg Light & Water

Pictured is a water main trench down Washington Avenue in the early 1920s when clean water and waste disposal were added to the city.

Cedarburg, News Graphic



Photo courtesy of Cedarburg Light & Water

As the demand for power increased, Cedarburg Light & Water expanded the plant and installed a diesel engine connected to a generator. By 1930, the utility had 845 electric customers, 138 streetlights and 456 water customers.

CL&W

From Page 1A

month. Clean water and waste disposal were added to the city in the early 1920s. By Jan. 21, 1923, six miles of water and sewer pipes, 60 fire hydrants and a water tower and equipment capable of pumping about 150,000 gallons of water a day were ready to use.

The utility will celebrate its 125th anniversary throughout 2026 with community events, educational programs, customer appreciation activities and volunteer efforts. The main celebration will take place in August, featuring food, equipment demonstrations and family-friendly activities.

Additional anniversary

highlights include student scholarships, a legacy tree-planting project and a series of “Then & Now” social media posts highlighting the utility’s history and evolution.

“Cedarburg Light & Water has been built generation by generation with a long-term commitment to this community,” said CL&W Commission President Andy Moss. “This anniversary reflects the value of local ownership, responsible stewardship, and the many people who have contributed to the utility’s success over the past 125 years.”

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Garage, vehicles total loss in Columbus fire

TERRI PEDERSON
tpederson@wiscnews.com

A garage with vehicles in it was a total loss following an early morning fire in Columbus.

The Columbus Fire Department was called to a fully engulfed unattached garage fire at 355 Richmond St. at 4:24 a.m. on Tuesday, Columbus Fire Deputy Chief Jerrod Fox said in a statement.

Nobody was in the garage, but it did contain three vehicles and a motorcycle, Fox said. The building was built in the mid-1990s and is a total loss along with everything that was inside.

No injuries were reported, Fox said.

“Columbus crews did a great job protecting the next-door neighbor’s garage directly behind this garage and the houses to the east and west of the fire,”



COLUMBUS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Three cars are shown that were destroyed in a garage fire at 355 Richmond St., Columbus, on Tuesday morning. The garage and all its contents were destroyed in the blaze.

Fox said. “With power lines down and sparking, plus the wind, and smoke blowing across the road, we had to watch where we were walking and attack the fire from different angles.”

Assisting Columbus Fire on scene was Lifestar EMS, Columbus Police, Columbus Utilities, Columbus

DPW, Fall River Fire and the CLR Fire Department. Precision Towing was called to the scene to pull the vehicles out of the garage, to finish extinguishing the fire.

Follow Terri Pederson on Twitter @tlp53916 or call 920-356-6760



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Eagle River sludge tank fills, options shrink

Officials seek open land for disposal

By Fred Williston

SPECIAL TO THE LAKELAND TIMES

The common council of the city of Eagle River, during its meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 10, was informed the high-capacity sludge tank at the city's wastewater treatment plant is approaching its maximum limit and officials must look for new options to dispose of its solid waste.

"I wanted to inform you of a challenge that we're facing at the wastewater department," Mike Sanborn, the director of the [Eagle River Light](#) and Water Department, told the council. "Our sludge tank is filling up. That's due to a couple of reasons."

"We're working with MSA (Engineering) for some solutions to that," Sanborn said. "The sludge tank is a 500,000-gallon tank. That's across the road, on the south side of Division Street. It's the big concrete tank with the dome on it."

"It's got about 18 feet of capacity,"

he said. "Right now, we're at about 14 and a half or 15 feet. We fill it at a rate of about one foot per month. We're going to be pushing it this spring."

The facility has faced compounding problems since Sanborn first reported to the council in July of last year the "forever chemical" PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) had been detected at the plant.

According to the PFAS Project Lab of Northeastern University: "PFAS are a group of manmade chemicals used in a vast number of consumer and industrial products. They're often referred to as 'forever chemicals,' because most don't break down."

The university also states the chemicals "Contain a strong carbon-fluorine bond that allows them to accumulate over time in the environment and in the bodies of animals and people, posing health risks."

PFAS has been detected in the region previously, most notably in municipal wells in Rhinelander.

According to Northeastern's PFAS Project Lab, some of the many origins of the chemicals are "Petro-

leum stations and terminals, chemical manufacturers, commercial printers, plastics and resin manufacturing sites, paint and coating manufacturers, semiconductor manufacturers, makers of metal products and electrical components, and electroplating and polishing."

"In addition, military bases and airports are major contributors to PFAS contamination, mostly from training and testing exercises using firefighting foam," the university states.

In July, Sanborn said his department would seek mitigation advice from MSA, based on recommendations from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the agency under whose purview PFAS detection, regulation, and remediation falls.

Following the discovery of PFAS at the Eagle River facility, an investigation was initiated to determine how the chemicals entered the city's wastewater system.

The wastewater treatment plant accepts leachates (solid and liquid wastes) from two sources: the city of Eagle River's public sewer system, and from some area businesses, which transport the fluids to the plant via pumper-trucks.

It was determined the source of the contamination was leachate from the Highway G Landfill just northwest of the city, owned by a consortium of municipalities in Vilas County called the Landfill Venture Group (LVG). Following that determination, the wastewater plant was forced to turn away the landfill's business.

"Of the concerns and challenges the wastewater utility has, the big one is the loss of the landfill revenue," Sanborn told the council in December. "We've got figures that show from 2016 to current on what we had received from the landfill revenue. It went anywhere from \$120,000 down to this year's (2025) year-to-date, which was down to \$9,000, and next year (2026), it's going to be zero, because we are no longer accepting it."

Between increasing maintenance costs and the loss of business from the LVG, the council voted to approve a 12 percent increase in water and sewer charges to customers in the city, and will likely vote on the possibility of another 10 percent increase in the near future to make up for the facility's budgetary shortfalls.

The two end products of the wastewater treatment facility are clean water (effluent) and semi-solid sludge. Both have tested positive for PFAS. The effluent is returned to the environment by expelling it into the Eagle River near the facility.

"The DNR, because it's still new in their experience — has not yet put any limits on effluent yet," Sanborn told *The Lakeland Times* in September. "I do think it's coming, but they haven't done anything about that yet."

Sludge is disposed of by spreading it onto open fields and allowing it to compost.

"We do have 22 to 24 acres of private field that we are still going to be allowed to spread on this spring, which equates to about 175,000 to potentially 250,000 or 275,000 if we can fill that field to its capacity," Sanborn told the council last week. "That's about 6 to 10 feet in the level of the tank, so we are looking for alternatives. In the past, we've had other fields that we've spread on throughout the summer and into the fall to empty the tank. There were five of those fields, and they're no longer available."

Following last week's meeting, Sanborn told the *Times* the presence of PFAS in the sludge may have contributed to the decisions by local landowners who had previously contracted with the city to receive the waste to cease accepting it.

"I can't say that's why they opted out of it," Sanborn said. "But that is potentially why they opted out."

"We're working with MSA on alternatives for the future and to get that tank empty by fall," Sanborn told the council last week. "As I pointed out in that summary, one of those would potentially be to hire a contractor to haul the sludge to fields somewhere south, where they're more readily available, if that's an option... Another one might be bringing in — on a semi-trailer — a sort of a portable sludge-drier, which would pull moisture out of the sludge and lighten it a little bit. We could potentially landfill it or take it to a field after that. In either case, it's going to cost money."

"Everything does," replied mayor Deb Brown.

Council member Jerry Burkett told Sanborn he would make calls to local landowners to see if he could broker deals where the city might be able to dispose of its sludge on their properties.

Sanborn reminded Burkett DNR regulations restrict where sludge can be dumped.

"The problem is there are setbacks," Sanborn cautioned. "There's a bunch of different setbacks that the DNR puts limitations on. They're set back from wells and lowlands; the slope of the field can't be too great, where the runoff is going to be affected. And soil types come into play, so there's a lot to it. If (private landowners) are open to it, we'd have to work with somebody to make sure that the field is capable of accepting it, but that would be great."

"The acreage that we still have available is going to take maybe a third or potentially half of the tank's capacity of the 500,000 gallons," Sanborn told the *Times*. "We can still get rid of a third to half of it... Usually, we'd spread on those fields late summer and into the fall before freeze-up."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOGRAPH

LAPC PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Lakeland Area Photographic Club (LAPC) member Bucky Myers captured this photo "Snowy Yukon Creek." The LAPC meets the third Wednesday of each month at the Minocqua Public Library from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Anyone interested in photography is welcome. Call 310-403-4617 for more information.



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Career Day at Florence County High School

FLORENCE, Wis. — Florence County High School hosted a Career Day for students Jan. 14, featuring numerous community professionals.

Students had the opportunity to hear about educational requirements, experience, market trends, and advice from local professionals.

The Florence County Health Department and University of Wisconsin- Extension thanked these individuals who presented to the students: Scott and Sarah Ash, restaurant owners; Jay and Lori Glime, logging industry; John Price, truck driver (CDL); Greg Seibold, Florence County district attorney; Janet Nanninga, social worker; Adam Anderson, Florence County Sheriff's deputy; Shawna Dishaw, land and water conservationist; Jamie Brewing-ton, electrician; Sidnie Graff, registered nurse; Amber Hicks, RE/MAX realtor; Chad Howard, fire and U.S. Forestry; Kristina Williams and Eric Lorenzen, [Florence Utilities](#); Tyler Wood and Taylor Ziolkowski, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Forestry; Melissa Faccio, county dispatch and corrections; Kurt Person, automotive and Power Sport engineer; and Cory Roell and Brandon Maki, emergency medical services.

Educating youth on career options is a strategy identified in the Florence County Community Health Improvement Plan to help them set goals and increase awareness. The program was a great success due to the commitment of many community participants.

For more information, contact Allison Krueger at the Florence County Health Department at 715-528-4837. The health department is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday in the Florence County Courthouse.

Florence Mining News - (1881-1894 & 2005-current)



A special section with ideas, helpful advice and designed especially for readers 55 and over.

ENERGY NEWS
Consumer Information
FLORENCE UTILITIES
A WPPI ENERGY COMMUNITY

ENERGY NEWS – FEBRUARY 2026 METERS FREE OF ICE AND SNOW

[Florence Utilities](#) is urging residents to keep safety first and make sure gas and electric meters are free from snow and ice. Taking the simple yet important safety step of keeping meters free of ice and snow can help ensure that safety remains a top priority for all. We offer these four important safety tips: 1) Remove snow and ice from around natural gas and electric meters. If snow and ice is allowed to build up, it can become compacted and freeze around the meter, causing damage that can interfere with its proper operation, and can also affect appliances served by that meter. 2) Snow should always be removed by hand, never with a shovel, metal / wood tools or power snow removal equipment. 3) Clear away snow from rooftop chimneys, fresh air intakes and furnace exhaust pipes. 4) Residents with high-efficiency furnaces should make sure

the intake pipes (typically two white plastic pipes coming out from the side of the home) are free from drifting snow to prevent possible obstructions that could interfere with safe operation.

Safely removing snow and ice around meters, intake valves and chimneys can also help prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. If you are concerned that the meter's vent may be blocked, please call [Florence Utilities](#) at 715-528-3330 for assistance.

CO POISONING
Carbon monoxide (CO) is called the "silent killer" because it is a colorless, odorless and tasteless toxic gas that can be produced when appliances are not operating or venting properly.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning often mimic the flu and include headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath and stinging or burning of the eyes. If any of these symptoms are experi-

enced, leave the area immediately and call 911 for help.

Installing an audible carbon monoxide alarm can literally be a lifesaver because it is the only way to be warned if this dangerous gas is ever produced. During the winter months when doors and windows are closed and furnaces are operating more carbon monoxide problems tend to occur. For more information regarding CO poisoning visit our website at www.florenceutilitieswi.com.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Remember to change the batteries and test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when you change your clock to Daylight Saving Time on Sunday, March 8, 2026.

CONTACT INFORMATION

[Florence Utilities](#) is once again reminding their customers how very important it is to keep our customer contact records up-to-date. With many homes choosing to discontinue use of a landline phone and rely solely on cell phone use it is very important that we have that number if the need should arise to contact

you due to a utility related emergency on your property. Please call our office at 715-528-3330 or send an email to: florenceutilities@florenceutilitieswi.gov to update our records. The information you provide is confidential and secure.
END OF MORATORIUM

Customers with outstanding balances are urged to call (715) 528-3330 to discuss a payment plan prior to the ending of the moratorium on April 15th. Office hours are Monday through Thursday 7:00 am to 4:30 pm, Friday 7:00 am to 11:00 am. The utility will gladly discuss various payment options available to customers, which includes accepting credit card payments.

HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

It is not too late to apply for heating assistance for the 2025-2026 heating season. Contact Energy Services for Florence County at 800-506-5596 to schedule an appointment to determine if you are eligible for financial assistance through Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). For more information regarding the program see <http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov>.

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ADRC
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The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of

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Photo courtesy of the City of Hartford

Utility technician Scott Sauer and journeyman lineman Curt Kreilkamp teach Lincoln Elementary students about electrical safety in Hartford.

Electrifying presentation

Hartford Utilities teaches electrical safety during Lincoln Elementary visit

HARTFORD — Representatives from Hartford Utilities, a municipally owned, nonprofit electric and water utility in Hartford, recently spent some time at Lincoln Elementary School to spread the word about electrical safety to the community's next generation.

Journeyman lineman Curt Kreilkamp and utility technician Scott Sauer, along with the city's [WPPI Energy Services](#) representative Ashley Sonsthagen, visited the school to give a presentation as part of the PowerTown electrical safety program with students.

PowerTown electrical safety is an interactive, tabletop educational demonstration designed to teach children and adults about the dangers of electricity. It uses a miniature village, including power lines and transformers, to simulate real-life electrical hazards — like arcing and downed wires — using a safe, 10,000-volt

current to show how to avoid shock or injury.

Using a replica PowerTown model and hands-on demonstrations, Kreilkamp and Sauer walked through how electricity gets from the power plant to homes and businesses in addition to talking about why it is so important to stay away from downed power lines and other electrical hazards. In addition, they also covered what students should do if they ever see something that doesn't look safe.

"We really enjoy getting into our local schools and talking with students," said the utility in a recent statement regarding the visit. "This is just one of the ways we work to promote electrical safety and awareness in the community."

For more information about Hartford Utilities, the services it provides and the events it takes part in, community members can visit hartfordutilities.org.



Hartford Utilities' second holiday food drive a success



Conjoined tables hold many of the items collected through Hartford Utilities' second holiday food drive before being donated to the Hartford Food Pantry in early February.

HARTFORD — Hartford Utilities has once again provided for members of the community as it wrapped up its second annual holiday food drive.

Hartford Utilities collected nearly 1,000 items in addition to monetary donations for the Hartford Food Pantry during a drive from December through January. Director of Utilities Brian Rhodes and other utility staff dropped off the items at the beginning of February. Donated items included canned food, cereal, rice, pasta, boxed meals, condiments and cooking essentials, tissues, toothbrushes, floss, tea, wipes, tissues, menstrual items, paper towels, food storage bags, and toilet paper. Customers who donated three or more items to the utility's drive were entered into a drawing for a bill credit. There were 10 available credits of \$50 and two \$100 bill credits.

"It's heartening that we had to make more than one trip," Rhodes said. "I know everyone here at the utility is grateful to the people who helped us host a successful drive again this year."

Though it is seen as a holiday drive, Rhodes explained that the utility continued the event to help collect items after the rush of holiday donations wanes.

"End of the year giving is such a nice thing, but we thought it would help boost the pantry at the beginning of 2026 to hold the event through January," Rhodes said. "We support the community we serve by giving back in different ways throughout the year."

The utility is currently hosting another drawing, but this time in the interest of ensuring customers are instantly notified of outages and can report one right from their cellphone. The only way customers can be notified in an urgent situation is if the contact information in their account is up to date, which is why any customers who update their phone number in MyAccount will be entered into a weekly drawing until the end of April.

Weekly winners receive a \$25 gift card from the Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce with a grand prize of \$500 in gift cards to be chosen May 1.



Photos courtesy of Hartford Utilities

Hartford Food Pantry Manager Beth Malecki, center, poses for a photo with, from left, Hartford Utilities technician Mike Okla, Director of Utilities Brian Rhodes, Energy Services Manager Ashley Sonsthagen and Hartford Utilities technician Scott Sauer after the Hartford Utilities staff dropped off items from their food drive Feb. 10.



Putting energy into saving energy and money

Hartford Electric completes LED streetlight changeover project

HARTFORD — The City of Hartford recently commended [Hartford Electric](#) on its recently completion of the city's conversion of their high-pressure sodium streetlights to energy-efficient LED fixtures.

The city has approximately 1,300 streetlights, according to a recent news release from the city. Now, following the completion of this project, each of them have been converted to LED. The city emphasized that this move is beneficial in that these new LED streetlights use much less energy, last longer and require less maintenance than the older fixtures they replaced.

The city also noted that this project was made possible through a federal Carbon Reduction Program grant administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The total project cost came out to nearly \$127,000, with the grant covering 80%. This came out to roughly \$101,478, which significantly reduced the financial impact on the utility and the city's ratepayers while allowing the city to modernize its overall lighting system.

"In addition to lowering operating costs, the new lights provide better vis-



Photo courtesy of the City of Hartford

[Hartford](#) Electric recently completed the conversion of our city's high-pressure sodium streetlights to energy-efficient LED fixtures.

ibility and improved lighting quality throughout the community," said the city in the release. "This is a good example of how we can take advantage of outside funding opportunities to invest in reliable, efficient infrastructure to improve the lighting quality in Hartford.



Supervisors approve lighting, sustainable transportation

JAMES KUCKKAN
james@wdtimes.com

JEFFERSON — Supervisors were busy last week as the Jefferson County Board approved resolutions for Fair Park lighting, sustainable transportation funding and an official zoning map amendment.

Jefferson County Fair Park is currently sourcing bids to transition all buildings within the park to LED interior lighting. The Park was awarded a \$125,000 grant through the Rural Energy Start-up Program for installing energy-efficient products.

In partnership with Focus on Energy and Jefferson Utilities, the County will also collect a projected commitment of \$157,000 in rebates. That creates a net of \$282,000 in funds available for the Jefferson County

Fair Park lighting transition.

Eight contractors participated in a pre-bid walkthrough, and six bids were officially received on January 13, 2026. Jefferson Current Electric was the low bidder, at \$183,109.

“Fiscal note: the project was budgeted in 2026 at an estimated cost and corresponding reimbursement of \$87,831,” said District 24 Supervisor Roger Lindl. “In order to accommodate this project, the 2026 budget will be amended to increase reimbursement, revenue and project expenses by \$95,278. This resolution authorizes the Finance Director to make the necessary budget Adjustment to reenact this resolution as a budget amendment. County Board approval requires two thirds vote of this membership of the County Board.

The County Board passed the resolution unanimously.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

The Wisconsin Counties Association issued a call-to-action early this year, calling on lawmakers and future governors to find a workable solution that secures sustainable transportation funding.

“Transportation funding to locals is through the Segregated Transportation Fund,” stated the Association in a Jan. 13 press release. “The state collects user fees — gas tax, registration fees, etc. — and that revenue is segregated into its own account, which is then used to fund local transportation programs.”

“This would be in the best interest of Jefferson County and our financial future,” said

District 8 Supervisor Michael Wineke. “The executive committee on January 28, 2026 unanimously recommended an adoption by the full board. Mr. Chair, I move approval.”

The County Board unanimously approved the resolution.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

The Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Committee held petitions to amend the official zoning map of Jefferson County, and filed for public hearings held on Jan. 15, 2026, pursuant to Wisconsin statutes.

Following public hearings, the Committee found the petitions consistent with the Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan and Farmland Preservation Plan. Additional

support for the Committee’s petitions were recorded in staff reports and individual petition files on record in the Planning and Development office. The approval of petitions as listed was dated as Feb. 10 by President of the Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Committee, Blane Paulson.

Paulson read the amendment, stating Planning and Zoning Committee found “the criteria and standards set forth... for rezoning out of A-1 Exclusive Agricultural Zone have been met,” and that these standards were consistent with the Jefferson County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plans.

This ordinance also passed.

The next Jefferson County Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10 at 7 p.m.

Fort Atkinson, Daily Jefferson County Union (1870-2005 & 2005-current)

County board approves lighting, sustainable transportation

JAMES KUCKKAN

james@wdtimes.com

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This ordinance also passed. The next Jefferson County Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10 at 7 p.m.

Kaukauna City hydroelectric plant getting wall stabilization and concrete repairs

Compiled by Brian Roebke
Editor

Kaukauna utility commissioners authorized General Manager Michael Avanzi to award the Kaukauna City Hydroelectric Plant Left Forebay Wall Stabilization and Concrete Repairs Project to Lunda Construction Company for \$163,266 at the Wednesday, Jan. 28, at the commission chambers.

The left forebay wall at the plant consists of a masonry structure with a concrete facing. Joints on the concrete facing were repaired more than 15 years ago but several of the repairs have deteriorated and additional areas of concrete spalling and deterioration have developed.

The condition of the left forebay wall was noted by the FERC during the 2024 annual inspection, requiring KU to repair the left forebay wall by Dec. 31, 2027. The repair plans involve removal of deteriorated concrete, installation of reinforcing anchors, and placement of grout.

Lunda had the lowest proposal at \$163,266 and completed a project for KU at the John Street Hydro Plant in 2025 with project costs

below budget and has experience with this type of concrete repair project. Lunda completed a similar project at the Kaukauna City Plant in 2007. A total of eight contractors provided proposals for the repair project.

The commission also approved awarding the underwater repair work associated with the Rapide Croche Plant Downstream Retaining Wall Replacement Project to Ballard Marine Construction for \$199,993

This wall has exhibited a consistent trend of movement toward the river and a significant vertical crack has been deteriorating since 2010.

The wall currently holds back the riverbank and access road to the plant. Failure of this wall would limit plant access and result in significant downtime for at least two of the hydroelectric generating units. There would also be significant regulatory implications and high construction repair costs.

Based on the results received, Ballard Marine Construction had the lowest proposal. Ballard has completed several projects for KU in the last 10 years and has an office

located in Neenah. Although the cost is greater than the budgeted cost, there was a change in scope discussed with the design engineer in late November that resulted in additional costs to complete the project. Based on the change in scope, the construction cost estimate for this project is \$215,000.

Another approval came to Avanzi to purchase the Vermeer RTX750 Quad Track trencher for \$199,500

Staff recognized the concern the commission may have with replacing the Ditch Witch RT80 trencher that is only 3 years old but based on documented maintenance history, operational limitations, and the recent structural issue, continued reliance on the RT80 presents increasing risk to schedule, productivity, and long-term cost control.

The recommended replacement is intended to stabilize operations, reduce unplanned downtime, and ensure the utility has equipment capable of performing required work safely and efficiently under typical local conditions.

Since being placed into service, the RT80 has experienced ongoing mechanical issues and performance limitations. In late 2025, a cracked boom was discovered. Based on cumulative operating experience and this structural concern, staff have concluded that continued reliance on this unit presents increasing operational and reliability risk.

This year's electronics recycling event will be held on Saturday, April 25, from 9 a.m. to noon.

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Brian Roebke photo

Billing and Customer Service Supervisor Dayna Holmes gave members of the Kaukauna Utilities Commission with an overview of the collection process at last week's meeting. The utility has more than 17,500 different accounts.

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4 people hurt in 2-vehicle crash in Outagamie County

Tue, February 17, 2026 at 4:51 AM

Tue, February 17, 2026

TOWN OF BUCHANAN (WLUK) -- A two-vehicle crash Monday night in Outagamie County sent four people to the hospital.

It happened around 8:40 p.m. at the intersection of County Highway Z and Haas Road in the town of Buchanan.

The Outagamie County Sheriff's Office says the preliminary investigation shows a minivan was headed south on Haas Road when it didn't stop at a stop sign.

The minivan then hit an SUV going east on County Highway Z.

When first responders arrived on scene, both cars were located in a field -- one just beyond the ditch and one further into the field. One of the vehicles was smoking, and due to an unknown utility box being hit, [Kaukauna utilities](#) was called to verify there was no live power at the scene.

Three people from Illinois were inside the minivan. They were taken to a local hospital with minor injuries.

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FEDERAL SPENDING BILL

\$12.5M for area projects stalled

Jesse Lin

Green Bay Press-Gazette

USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

Within the federal funding package that nearly derailed in the U.S. Senate is \$12.5 million to fund projects mostly related to transportation, housing and urban development across northeastern Wisconsin for the 2026 fiscal year.

These represent the bulk of requests made by Democratic U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Republican U.S. Rep. Tony Wied for 19 projects in the region using Community Project Funding.

Of those 19 projects, Baldwin and Wied secured about \$19.4 million over the summer through House and Senate appropriations committees for 13, meaning six projects did not get any funding.

About \$6.9 million requested already passed through Congress in prior appropriations bills, going toward things like clinic renovations and phosphorous treatment systems.

See SPENDING BILL, Page 3A



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Spending bill

Continued from Page 1A

"My number one goal in Washington is to make life better for the great people of Wisconsin's 8th District, and I am proud to have secured these critical funds to help do just that," Wied said in a Jan. 23 news release.

In a statement to the Green Bay Press-Gazette, Baldwin said, "Whether it's ensuring our emergency services have the tools they need to keep their communities safe, expanding affordable housing, or investing in our youth, I'm proud to be fighting in Washington for northeastern Wisconsin. I have always said that I will work with anyone to deliver for Wisconsin communities - and that is just what these investments show."

Any money in the larger \$1.2 trillion omnibus bill needed to pass the Senate, where Democrats, including Baldwin, said they wouldn't support any measure unless funding for the Department of Homeland Security was separated from the larger spending package. The Senate on Jan. 29 reached a deal to pass the spending bills with separate, temporary funding for the Department of Homeland Security. Passage in the House remained unclear the evening of Jan. 29.

What is Community Project Funding?

Before a temporary ban in 2011, congressional legislators put into spending bills what were known as earmarks - a request by a congressperson directing money toward a specific project, by-passing other ways that Congress allocates money. These were at the center of corruption probes and associated with graft before being temporarily banned in 2011 after calls from Tea Party Republicans to rein in government spending.

Earmarks returned under the name Community Project Funding for the 2022 fiscal year. With the new name came a new process "to help ensure transparency and accountability," according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

All members of Congress are required to publicize their requests, which must follow rules set by that year's appropriations committees. House representatives can submit up to 15 requests. Senators have no limit.

Requests, which have historically been for local governments to get money for projects not easily financed elsewhere, are evaluated by the House or Senate appropriations committees and their different subcommittees, passed through Congress, then land on the president's desk.

The window for representatives and senators to submit requests for the 2026 fiscal year closed by early June 2025, depending on the relevant subcommittee and the congressional chamber. The relevant House and Senate committees in the summer then approved and inserted funding into their respective

House or Senate bills.

Lawmakers are not required to put requests forward, and not all representatives or senators do. Since the new system began in the 2022 fiscal year, archived House appropriations records show no projects were listed for Wisconsin's 8th Congressional District under former Rep. Mike Gallagher's tenure. Republican Sen. Ron Johnson also did not request Community Project Funding for the 2026 fiscal year, according to Senate appropriations records.

Of the over 100 requests across Wisconsin that Baldwin submitted, she made 13 requests for projects in the state's northeast, totaling about \$40.4 million. These projects are scattered across the region and include military construction, housing, water infrastructure; eight were fulfilled at least in part.

Wied requested funding for seven projects, totaling about \$24.7 million, mostly for infrastructure and public safety projects in the Green Bay metro area and Appleton; six were at least partially fulfilled.

Here's what the two lawmakers asked for and what they secured (and didn't), categorized by location.

Fond du Lac

- **Rehabbing collapsed sewer and failing water infrastructure in Village of Brandon: \$406,000, passed in prior legislation.** Baldwin's request was fully granted by the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

- **Fond du Lac County railroad overpass: No award in pending legislation.** The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not grant Baldwin's \$6.9 million request.

- **Housing for women recovering from substance abuse: No award in pending legislation.** The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not grant Baldwin's \$150,000 request for Gratitude Club, a sobriety and recovery nonprofit in Fond du Lac.

Green Bay metro area

- **New Green Bay Metro Fire Department headquarters: \$5 million, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** Both Baldwin and Wied requested funding for a new fire station. Baldwin's \$5 million request was fully granted in the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Wied's \$7 million request was awarded in part, receiving \$1 million in the House Committee on Appropriations. The final bill will only award \$5 million, which will be attributed to both lawmakers as they both applied for funding.

- **Austin Straubel International Airport renovations: \$4 million, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** Wied's office asked for \$10 million to renovate an aging taxiway, plus apron intersections, "as well as correcting non-standard geometry" at the intersection of some taxiway, according to the project justification. Modifications need to be made to meet the most current safety standards and "prevent

taxiway excursions," the justification said. The House Committee on Appropriations approved about 40% of that request.

- **New Suamico water tower: \$1 million, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** Suamico is looking to build a 300,000-gallon water tower to meet water demand in the village. Wied requested \$1.9 million. The House Committee on Appropriations granted about half the total requested.

- **Tiny homes for veterans: \$480,000, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** The nonprofit Veterans 1st of NEW wants to build 21 homes for veterans in Green Bay. Baldwin requested \$480,000 toward that goal, an ask the Senate Committee on Appropriations granted in full.

- **Oneida language documentation, preservation, and access: \$125,000, passed in prior legislation.** Baldwin requested \$125,000 for the nonprofit Skankulak dedicated to preserving Oneida heritage. The Senate Committee on Appropriations granted the request in full.

- **Boys and Girls Club of the Bay & Lakes Region building renovations: No award in pending legislation.** Baldwin requested \$500,000 that would've gone to renovate youth development programming buildings in Brown and Door counties. The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not grant the request.

Appleton

- **Boys and Girls Club of Fox Valley, supporting mental and behavioral health issues, especially for at-risk youth: \$1 million, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** The Senate Committee on Appropriations granted Baldwin's request in full.

- **Appleton Police Department robotic technology upgrades: \$425,000, passed in prior legislation.** The House Committee on Appropriations fully granted Wied's \$425,000 request for the Appleton Police Department. The money would be used to "acquire technologies and equipment to assist local law enforcement agencies in their mission," the project justification said.

- **Appleton International Airport ticketing and baggage upgrades: No award in pending legislation.** The House Committee on Appropriations did not award any money toward Wied's \$2.3 million request for the airport's ticketing and baggage infrastructure. The money would've been used "for technological advancements necessary to accommodate projected passenger growth, introduce additional airline partners, and maintain a high level of service," according to the project justification. The justification also described the current layout as being challenging for those with disabilities to navigate and airline staff "working in confined spaces."

Town of Calumet

- **Town of Calumet, design and construction of agricultural runoff treat-**

ment system: \$420,000, passed in prior legislation. Baldwin's request was fulfilled in its entirety by the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Kaukauna

- **Kaukauna Utilities water treatment system improvements: \$1 million, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** **Kaukauna Utilities** is looking to transition to a reverse osmosis process to treat its water. Wied asked for \$2 million to "modify its water system by construction durable buildings and installing modern programming to ensure that the residents of Kaukauna will still have access to potable water during and after severe weather events," the project justification said. The House Committee on Appropriations granted half of the request.

Manitowoc

- **Vehicle maintenance shop construction at Andrew Miller Army Reserve Center: No award in prior legislation.** The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not grant Baldwin's \$16 million request.

Marinette

- **Highway rebuild in Marinette County: No award in pending legislation.** The Senate Committee on Appropriations did not grant Baldwin's \$5 million request.

Oconto

- **Emply Health, Oconto expansion: \$1 million, awaiting passage and presidential signature.** Wied requested \$1 million to renovate and expand infusion services at Emply Health's clinic in Oconto. "Funding would be used to redefine and expand infusion services within the hospital's existing footprint, which is used to treat many illnesses from cancer to dehydration," read the project's justification on the representative's website. "The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it would allow them to expand this critical service and allow more patients to get care closer to home." The request was fully granted by the House Committee on Appropriations.

Oshkosh

- **Installation of phosphorous treatment system for Oshkosh: \$3.2 million, passed in prior legislation.** The Senate Committee on Appropriations fully granted Baldwin's request categorized as "City of Oshkosh for Wastewater Treatment," by the committee.

Jesse Lin is a reporter covering the community of Green Bay and its surroundings, as well as politics in northeastern Wisconsin. He also writes a weekly column answering reader questions about Green Bay. Contact and send him questions at 920-834-4250 or jljlin@usatodayco.com.



Local power grid helps states overwhelmed by severe weather

Feb 6, 2026

In this episode of In Context, Nancy Mayfield is joined by Jan Kahler, the chairperson of the Maquoketa Municipal Electric Utility (MMEU) Board of Trustees. Kahler talks about how the power grid that serves Maquoketa residents was also used to help restore energy in states hit with severe winter storms.

https://youtu.be/z4UyU_15-Aw



Title: Presentation in Maquoketa will discuss data centers

Author:

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Presentation in Maquoketa will discuss data centers

MAQUOKETA, Iowa — An upcoming presentation in Jackson County will examine the issue of data centers.

Lunch & Learn: Intro to Data Centers will be held from noon to 1 p.m. March 10 at Maquoketa Area Chamber of Commerce, 124 S. Main St., according to an online announcement.

Guest speakers will be Ben Davison, of Jackson County Energy District, and Chris Krogman, of **Maquoketa Municipal Electric Utility**.

The presentation will highlight data centers and how they function.

Cost is \$15 for chamber members and \$20 for non-members. Lunch is included in admission.

Register by March 6 online at maqevents.com.

Mount Horeb Mail

Department heads provide updates

By ERIN HERNDON
Mount Horeb Mail

Mount Horeb Utilities department heads reported to the Utility Commission on their November and December 2025 activities. The Commission met for their monthly meeting Jan. 13, 2026, receiving updates from the Electric Department, Water Department and Wastewater Department. They additionally discussed the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG) and approved their Nov. 11 meeting minutes and finances.

Electric Department Report

Electric Superintendent Jordan Schmitz presented his report for November and December 2025. In his report, Schmitz said the department completed seven new underground services

in November and three in December. Additionally, he said 2025 saw 30 outages overall, with two occurring in November and zero in December.

“Knock on wood, but right now, we are at a month and a half with no outages. I think it has been 13 years since we have gone two months straight, so that is my goal right now,” Superintendent Schmitz said. “This is the one thing where I think you guys can really see the difference that we are making.”

Schmitz said the department documented 1,069-meter outages in 2025 compared to 6,904 meters impacted in 2024. He said the department efficiently responded to callouts, with the annual average response time being 12.4333 minutes. He said he hopes continued tree maintenance in 2026

will further decrease outages and callouts in the new year

“In 2025, 780 of those were from one outage, and it was a tree on North A,” Schmitz said. “The crew started tree trimming. To keep outages down, I do want to cut a little bit more than normal because we’ve been super busy. Be kind to the crew, if you don’t want a lot taken off your tree, they will listen to you.”

Water Department Report

During the Water Department’s portion of the meeting, Water Superintendent Brian Schult said in November the team worked on switching out radio read boxes to flex boxes. They also rebuilt a North 8th Street fire hydrant that was hit by a car and finished the current phase of the Nesheim project.

“The Nesheim project has been completed in November, with final pavement put down,” Superintendent Schult said. “After talking with the Smith Group, it sounds like the final walk-through will take place in April to get a punch list together on anything that was missed or needs attention.”

In his December report, Schult shared that the department completed water main testing, cross connection inspections and end-of-year water department inventory, including the tallying of water meters, flex boxes, compression fittings and repair clamps.

“We worked on doing our cross-connection inspections for commercial properties and also for public authority properties,” Schult said. “Our residential cross connection inspections are completed as we change out

water meters throughout the year in the Village.”

They additionally completed their monthly bacteria and fluoride split samples and repaired one service leak in November as well as two water main breaks.

Wastewater Department Report

The meeting wrapped up with Wastewater Superintendent Michael Brace sharing an overview of the Wastewater Department’s November and December 2025 activity.

According to his monthly reports, the department received three callouts over November and December. Additionally, the wastewater plant ran well through both months and operated below all permitted limits.

“As weather has brought us back inside, we reviewed

all of our televising reports and manhole inspection reports from the year to better identify priority areas of concern,” Superintendent Brace said. “We identified whether that is to replace linings, manhole rehabs, or what not.”

Brace said while in December the team cleaned 440 feet of sanitary main to clear the backup on Front Street, they did not get any manhole inspection or televising done due to the weather. He also said L.W. Allen Pump Systems completed the annual flow meter calibration, and both influent and effluent meters at the facility were calibrated and confirmed to be in good working order.

“This has to be completed in the year, and we got it done on December 31,” Brace said.



New London Utilities Board meets

Feb. 19, 2026 1:43 pm

The New London Municipal Utilities Trustees met in regular session on Feb. 5, 2026. They approved the agenda and the consent agenda. No one addressed the trustees in open forum. Reports were up next. Chairman Heater and the trustees have participated in an orientation of the water department. They went over the facilities, the equipment, the finances, the customers, and the data.

The wind turbine production was almost 5,000,000 kWh for 2025 according to Chairman Heater.

They next heard from the utility foreman Dave Ford. He listed for the trustees several items that were repaired or replaced over the month.

Ford reported that during the weekend of Jan. 24, MISSO required that they operate the diesel generators. They experienced minor issues with two of the four units, which prevented them from running at that time. The problems have since been resolved, and all generators are now fully operational.

Ford then explained that the community's water usage is typically stable, but recently they have been treating a higher volume of water. He suspects there may be a leak somewhere in the system. Since they have been unable to locate it themselves, he has hired a leak detection company to investigate.

Ford shared that he has been communicating with WES Engineering about the spring maintenance for the wind turbine. They informed him that other communities with the same turbine model have experienced generator failures. As a result, the Trustees should be prepared to decide on the associated expense if a similar issue occurs here.

In new business, they approved the budget for fiscal year (FY) 2026-2027. The Trustees reviewed the audit report for FY 2025.

The trustees discussed the necessity of updating their 3-year plan. They will hold a Projects committee meeting and a building & equipment meeting before next month to begin this process.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. The next regular utility board meeting will be March 5, 2026 at 1 p.m. at the City office.



... of in and day This high school senior, w continued. Use your phone to

Tech entrepreneur Jeff Cernohous to speak at UW—River Falls Feb. 18

RIVER FALLS – The University Business Collaboration Center (UBCC) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls is introducing a new monthly panel, the Innovators Speaker Series. The first guest speaker will be Jeff Cernohous, COO of Interfacial Consultants and chief innovation officer of

Nagase, who will speak about his experiences as an innovative business entrepreneur. His talk will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18 in the new Science and Technology Innovation Center (SciTech), 410 S. Third St., in room 194. The event is free and open to the public.

After starting his career at 3M, Cernohous founded Interfacial Solutions, a 3D printing company that utilizes sustainable materials, which was then acquired by Stratasys in 2014. Cernohous has since been a leader in many successful tech business ventures and has also won several awards, including

recognition as UWRF’s Distinguished Alumni along with his wife, Kristi Cernohous.

A reception with light refreshments will be held at 7 p.m., following the talk.

Future guest speakers scheduled in the series include:

Brooke Lee, CEO of An-

chor Paper, March 12.

Kevin Westhuis, utility director at River Falls Municipal Utilities, April 8.

For more information, contact Blane Huppert at blane.huppert@uwrf.edu.

Submitted by UW-River Falls



Jeff Cernohous

Roger Neil DeLong, of [River Falls](#), passed away peacefully on February 19, 2026, at age 84, after a lengthy battle with cancer. Roger was born on November 10, 1941 in Elmwood, Wisconsin, to Neil and Dorothy (nee Reitz) DeLong. He attended schools in Eau Galle, Wisconsin, Washington state, and Elmwood, Wisconsin. Roger married Bonnie Koehler on July 14, 1962, and moved to River Falls where he began a career with the City of River Falls Utility Department. He retired as the Superintendent of River Falls Municipal Utilities in 2002 after over 40 years of service to the River Falls community.

Roger was a long time member of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was a volunteer firefighter with the River Falls Fire Department for many years. In his younger days he enjoyed stock car racing at Cedar Lake Speedway, playing softball, bowling, fishing and hunting. In his later years his hobbies included garden tractor pulling with Gopher States Pullers, woodworking, attending car shows with his Ford Mustang, playing Euchre and watching sports. He was an avid Green Bay Packer and Minnesota Twins fan and also enjoyed watching NASCAR, always cheering for the Fords. He loved spending time with family, especially his grandchildren.

Roger is survived by his children, Tim (Kathy) DeLong and Teresa (Dan) Webber; grandchildren, Justin DeLong, Jacob (Kara) DeLong, Emalee DeLong, Nick (Maria) Webber, Alex (Hannah Engle) Webber and Sarah Webber; great-grandson, William; sister-in-law, Lorraine DeLong, as well as nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. He was preceded in death by his wife, Bonnie; parents, Neil and Dorothy; brother, Douglas DeLong, twin infant sisters, Deborah and Darleen, an infant brother and an infant sister.

Funeral services were held on Thursday, February 26, 2026, 2:00 p.m. at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church (545 Apollo Rd) in River Falls, Wisconsin, with visitation one hour before the service. Arrangements by Bakken-Young Funeral & Cremation Services.

In lieu of flowers, memorials to the following organizations in honor of Roger would be appreciated: Cancer Center of Western Wisconsin, 501 Hospital Road, New Richmond, Wisconsin 54017 OR Women of Faith, Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, 545 Apollo Road, River Falls, Wisconsin 54022



Fire damages Waupun home and displaces two residents

Brandon Reid
Fond du Lac Reporter
USA TODAY NETWORK – WISCONSIN

WAUPUN – No one was injured but a Waupun home is uninhabitable, and two residents displaced after a fire Wednesday night, Jan. 28.

The home, at 25 N. Watertown St., sustained significant attic fire damage and additional water damage, Waupun Fire Department said in a news release. The residents are being assisted by the Red Cross.

Cause of the fire remains under investigation.

How the fire unfolded

Crews responded to the home at 11:26 p.m. Jan. 28. When they arrived, they noticed smoke visible from the roof.

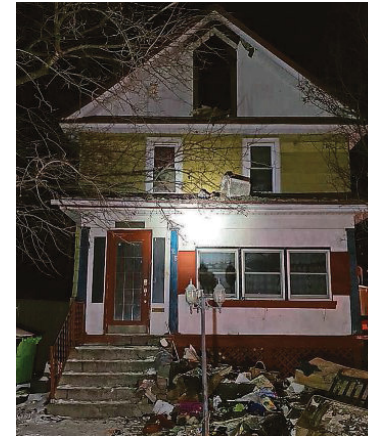
Firefighters entered the home to locate the blaze but encountered limited access to the attic, the department said, prompting crews to cut a ventilation hole in the roof to reach and suppress the fire. Crews remained on scene for about

three hours completing extinguishment and overhaul operations.

What agencies assisted

Departments from Dodge and Fond du Lac counties assisted, along with Waupun First Responders, Waupun Police, Lifestar EMS, Alliant Energy, [Waupun Utilities](#), the Fond du Lac County Communications Center, and the Red Cross.

Contact Brandon Reid at breid@usa-todayco.com.



A home at 25 N. Watertown St. in Waupun is uninhabitable after a fire Jan. 28. PROVIDED BY WAUPUN FIRE DEPARTMENT