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Moving back to budget basics in Wisconsin

WISCONSIN POLICY FORUM

Heading into the 2025-27 state budget, Wisconsin retains impressive reserves that put the state in a strong financial position and allow it to consider limited spending increases or tax cuts. As expected, however, the budget has lost some of its exceptional strength from two years ago, meaning state officials may wish to exercise caution this budget cycle, especially if they are eyeing large permanent tax cuts or spending increases.

After soaring to previously unseen heights two years ago, Wisconsin's budget has predictably returned much closer to earth, our latest analysis shows.

Two years ago, the combined forces of eye-popping inflation and massive federal pandemic aid boosted state tax collections and, when paired with relatively tight limits on spending, produced unprecedented state surpluses. Those surpluses helped to build up state reserves that remain exceptionally large.

Yet today, the situation has reversed: the state's main fund is spending more than it is taking in and the state's balances are falling. The state retains billions in reserves, but state

leaders now have more reason to exercise caution in approving permanent spending and tax cuts than they did in November 2022.

To illustrate how the outlook has changed, we strip the budget down to its essentials and compare the starting point for the upcoming state budget with those in previous two-year cycles.

How we did our analysis

Our analysis relies on projected tax collections and spending amounts in the state's general fund that are estimated by the Department of Administration (DOA) for the budget running from July 2025 to June 2027. We include certain routine adjustments to the budget but exclude all new spending requests by state agencies.

As a result, these numbers do not factor in the rising cost of current services and do not represent a true surplus. They should be seen as a starting point for the upcoming budget rather than a complete proposal.

Using this approach, we calculate that state general fund revenues are currently projected to exceed base spending with some adjustments by

\$838 million over the two-year budget. That's down from the \$6.8 billion in excess starting revenues that we calculated two years ago.

The current budget starts from a reasonably good position. Yet it looks much more like previous cycles than it does the current 2023-25 budget, which had an unusually strong start.

One bright spot not shown in these numbers is the \$6 billion in reserves projected for next June in the state's combined general and rainy-day fund balances. Those funds can be used to pay for state priorities but can only be tapped once.

After accounting for all of these factors, our analysis finds the state is in a reasonably strong position to address the ongoing costs of present state and local services and make some new commitments, particularly if they are one-time in nature. However, elected officials may wish to exercise caution as they consider some of the large potential proposals for permanent new spending or tax cuts that have been discussed.

Why the surplus rose and fell

The excess revenues that we

found in the run-up to the current 2023-25 budget reflected several exceptional factors that have since changed. First, the federal government delivered more than \$60 billion in pandemic aid to state and local governments, individuals, and businesses in Wisconsin. These payments juiced the economy and state tax collections and also helped to offset state and local government costs. High inflation added to state sales tax revenues, and yet despite these rising costs, lawmakers limited state and local spending fairly tightly in the 2021-23 budget.

All of these factors have now shifted. Federal COVID-19 aid has run out, inflation has largely subsided, and elected officials have felt pressure to allow both state and local spending to rise to make up for the impact of previous inflation. One example is the passage last year of Wisconsin Act 12, which increased state aid to local governments and provided for automatic increases in future aid payments that the state must fund going forward.

Some of this shift is reflected in the state's latest revenue projections, which show more modest growth in tax collec-

tions over the next two years. The figures come from the Nov. 20 budget report, which is published every two years by DOA as a starting point for state budget deliberations. According to longstanding custom, the report's 2025-27 budget figures incorporate every spending request made by state agencies. These requests total \$2.11 billion in year one of the upcoming budget and \$3.47 billion in year two.

Yet because the governor and Legislature never approve these requests in their entirety, we remove them to provide a better comparison of where the state stands. Our analysis does include more routine adjustments such as fund transfers and a placeholder reserve amount for potential increases to state employee compensation.

What's not included

The numbers allow for helpful comparisons across budget cycles. However, they do not include additional funds to help pay for the rising cost of services such as Medicaid health care for the poor, K-12 schools, local governments, prisons, technical colleges, and the Universities of Wisconsin. Table 1 shows estimates for those additional costs.

For example, maintaining existing Medicaid services is expected to cost an additional \$1.1 billion over the next two years, which on its own is more than the excess revenues we identified. The state could save an estimated \$1.7 billion over the next two years by using federal funds to expand Medicaid coverage in Wisconsin, but Republican legislative leaders have indicated that they do not support doing so.

Some of these changes would have permanent impacts on the state budget, including income tax cuts previously approved by lawmakers and then vetoed by Gov. Tony Evers and the governor's own past childcare proposal. Approving several of these ideas could require countervailing tax increases or spending cuts at some point in the future to keep the state budget balanced.

There could also be many local effects of increasing spending permanently or opting not to do so. For example, current state law ensures a \$325 per student increase each year in the total revenues that school districts can receive from state general aid and local property taxes. Over the two-year budget, that increase will allow up to nearly \$790 million in new revenues for school districts. Absent any change to the limits, the state would need to provide additional general aid or else school boards could decide whether to raise property taxes by the remaining amount.

Other proposals would have only one-time impacts to the budget that could be absorbed using the state's reserves. For example, the state could choose to invest \$617 million of its reserves into capital projects, about half of the general tax revenue transferred to the building program for this purpose in the current 2023-25 budget. Using cash for these projects instead of borrowing for them would match one-time spending with one-time revenue while also limiting state debt. Elected officials could even consider helping to fund pressing local capital needs such as replacing the Milwaukee County

Justice Center.

The Forum is not advocating for or against any of these proposals from across the political spectrum. However, the size and ongoing nature of some of these commitments show how unlikely it is that the state could fund all of them without encountering budget challenges in future years.

Future uncertainty

As with any projection for conditions more than two years from now, there is considerable uncertainty about future state revenues and spending. The economy and state costs and tax collections could be affected by global events and federal policies on taxes, tariffs, and immigration. Those factors in turn could have big impacts on the state's fiscal position.

The picture will clear somewhat once the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) issues its own revenue forecast in January – and possibly again in May – that will draw on more data on the state's taxes and economy. Yet even then, much could change over the following two years.

We can say with more certainty that the state expects to have substantial reserves on June 30, 2025. At present, the state is projected to have a \$4.0 billion general fund budget balance at that time and an additional \$2 billion rainy-day fund balance. That adds up to \$6.0 billion in total reserves.

While this figure is \$3 billion less than the unprecedented balances for the state at the close of 2023, it is still much greater than the state's reserves at almost any other point in recent history. To put the state's balances into context, the National Association of State Budget Officers reported last spring that states averaged total reserves of 23.3% of general fund spending in 2024 compared to 26.9% for Wisconsin.

These balances provide a substantial opportunity for state leaders to make investments in their chosen priorities. However, they would only cover large permanent spending increases or tax cuts for a limited time.

Options going forward

Decisions by state and federal leaders of both parties in recent years have left the Wisconsin budget in a solid position. Given the state's many needs and sizable reserves, it is appropriate for elected officials to consider a range of investments in the next budget to improve the lives of Wisconsin residents.

However, state leaders may wish to consider how much budget conditions have changed in just two years. No longer can they make massive spending increases and tax cuts without impacting future funding for existing programs and services. In particular, they may wish to consider how much of their current reserves they should spend and how much they should save to protect against unforeseen shocks.

The influx of federal aid and a relatively strong economy helped protect the state's finances in recent years despite the incredible turmoil of the pandemic. Yet there is no guarantee that the state's good fortune will last. In future years, the state may have to rely less on outside assistance and more on the prudence of its own elected officials.



As you spend the holidays getting together with family and friends, it's our wish that you take extra care in getting there. Be especially careful on the road. Drive sensibly and defensively.

AND MOST IMPORTANT, Never Drink & Drive

Just a small amount of alcohol can impair your driving ability. Don't let alcohol damage your holiday mood – play it safe for everyone's sake.

Best wishes for a safe and happy New Year!

The following community-minded individuals and firms wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season:

- Campbell's Piggly Wiggly
- Body Crafters Auto Body and Repair, Inc.
- Luecke's Diamond Center
- DP Concrete & Landscaping, Inc.
- Brodhead Collision

What is happening in the library in January?

By Cindy Clint
ALBERTSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Here's what's happening during the month of January at the Albertson Memorial Library.
The library will be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

It's the 'Wonder of Winter' during this month's preschool story time. Enjoy stories and crafts every Tuesday at 10 a.m. with our Children's Programming Specialist, Miss Laura. This month's tales are all about winter's best-kept secrets, cozying up in the frosty season, snowy serenades, and the magical mischief that happens when snowflakes start to dance!

The Albany Joint Library Board Meeting will be held at the library on Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting is open to the public.

Do you have a young child that wants to play cards, but their tiny hands struggle to grasp all those cards? Or perhaps an elderly loved one facing challenges with their dexterity? Want to make something that can help? Join us at craft night with Diane, Jan. 8 at 6:30 p.m. to make your own playing card holder.

Come in on Jan. 17 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. for a special Creative Capers learning event. Master the art of creating a hand-knit chunky blanket and unravel the secrets of crocheting a granny square, along with techniques to weave this foundational square

into delightful bags and/or cardigans. Patterns and instruction will be provided. To make a twin-size throw, bring 28 yards of weight 7 yarn. To crochet granny squares, bring weight 4 yarn along with a crochet hook sized between 4 and 8 mm, with a recommended size of 5 to 6 mm. If you're all about your own creative vibes, grab what you're working on and join the crafting party for some chit-chat and scrumptious snacks!

Are you on the hunt for a pawsitively delightful indoor adventure? Do furry friends make your heart wag? Then come join us Jan. 21 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. for some tail-wagging fun as you read to our adorable therapy duo, Abi and Daisy. Everyone from toddlers to grandpas is invited to join the furry fiesta! Give us a ring at 608-862-3491 or make tracks over to the library to snag your time slot today.

Whether you're a word wizard or just starting out, everyone's invited to join the fun on Jan. 23 at 6:30 p.m. to share and be inspired while working on their writing projects with the Sugar River Writers.

Join us for our monthly book club, All Booked Up, on Jan. 27 at 6:30 p.m. This month we will be discussing 'Small Mercies' by Dennis Lehane, an all-consuming tale of revenge, family love, festering hate, and insidious power, set against one of

the most tumultuous episodes in Boston's history.

Please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AlbertsonMemorialLibrary, Instagram at www.instagram.com/albertsonmemoriallibrary or check out our calendar of events on our website at www.albertsonlibrary.org for additional information.

Library learnings

Want to learn a foreign language? Let the Albertson Memorial Library assist you in achieving your goal with Transparent Language.

To begin your journey of mastering a new language, go to the Albertson Memorial Library website at www.albertsonlibrary.org/. Don't have a computer or Wi-Fi? No problem; use the library's computer.

Click on 'Transparent Language,' which can be found on our home page under the section labeled 'Library Links.' Click the 'Continue as a guest' button or if you want to keep track of your progress, select 'Create an Account.' Enter the requested information, check the box next to 'I agree to the terms of use,' and click 'Continue.'

Choose a language to learn and select the option for 'English Speakers' or chose your native language. Review the tutorial and start your first lesson adventure. Unlock your potential now.



PHOTOS COURTESY LAURA ROTH Rock Valley Publishing

Stories and songs about a stable

The preschool story time at Albertson Memorial Library went back to the stable last week, reading stories about the stable and the animals that surrounded the baby Jesus. The Donkey's Song by Jacki Kellum was a particular favorite. Then they constructed popsicle stick stables and some farm animals to go with it. Finally, they gathered around the Christmas tree to take a group photo, wishing everyone a very merry Christmas! The next meeting will be Jan. 7: The Secrets of Winter. They'll use flashlights to practice making shadow animals and read a book with pictures that can only be seen using a flashlight. The Albany library would like to announce a reading challenge for adults only during the month of January. The challenge is to read 31 minutes every day all 31 days for a chance to win the grand prize. Library director Melissa Everson is eager to bake cupcakes for the winner. Stop in for more details and to pick up an entry form.

Zoo offers Frosty Free Week

It's the season of giving, and the Milwaukee County Zoo is offering a week of free daytime admission to thank the community for their support.

All guests will receive complimentary daytime admission during Frosty Free Week sponsored by Generac, Dec. 26 to 30. Regular parking and attraction rates still apply. Regular admission rates apply to the Zoo's Wild Lights night events. The Zoo is open from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on weekdays and 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends.

"Generac is delighted to partner with our Zoo to en-

able everyone to experience the wonders of animals and create new memories with family and friends during the holiday season," said Kelly Skindzelewski, community programs manager at Generac. "Sponsoring Frosty Free Week reflects Generac's commitment to supporting our community and creating opportunities."

Make sure the first stop is to welcome back the Humboldt penguins to their newly-renovated habitat: Penguins of the Pacific. Providing increased opportunities for nose-to-beak interactions with guests, the penguins have been exploring - and splashing! -

around the habitat. Penguins of the Pacific features a larger pool, bigger viewing windows, shade structures, penguin waterfall, upgraded water filtration system, and more - all for increased comfort and engagement for the flock. Humboldt penguins' natural range is along the coastal regions of Peru and Chile. Their population has been steadily declining in recent decades, and they are classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

For more information about Frosty Free Week, please call the Zoo at 414-771-3040 or visit milwaukeezoo.org.

Rock County 2024 real estate tax bills in the mail

The 2024 real estate property tax bills for Rock County are being mailed. The tax bills are also on Rock County's website at www.co.rock.wi.us.

The first installment of the 2024 tax bills are due on or before Jan. 31. Please read the tax bill to see if the payment should be made to the county treasurer or the local treasurer. For example, City of Janesville property owners pay the county treasurer while Town of Janesville property owners pay the Town of Janesville treasurer.

For property owners who pay to the county treasurer, the office is open for in-person payments. There are also two tax payment drop boxes located inside the Rock County Courthouse at 51 South Main Street, Janesville. One of them is before security and one is after security on the second floor next to the treasurer's office

door. Normal business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Courthouse will be closed Jan. 1 and 20. Please make check, money order, cashier's/official check payable to: Rock County Treasurer and include all tax id numbers with amounts that are being paid on each. If paying by mail or bill pay, the mailing address is 51 South Main Street, Janesville, WI 53545. Those that would like a receipt mailed to them should please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Rock County locals can also pay online using GovTech Services through the website, if the county collects the first installment.

To pay online visit www.co.rock.wi.us/departments/treasurer. There is a fee for using this method of payment: Electronic check \$1, credit card \$2.29%, and debit card \$3.95. By phone, call 1-855-912-7625 and follow the voice prompts.

For questions, please call the office during normal business hours at 608-757-5670 and listen to the voice message and stay on the line.

Public parking is in the front only in the upper and lower parking lots and people must go through security if they want to come to the second floor to use the drop box next to the treasurer's office.

Downtown restaurant week honor local cuisine

Downtown Janesville Inc., in partnership with the Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and Downtown Business Improvement District, is excited to announce Downtown Restaurant Week, which will be held Tuesday, Jan. 14 to Friday, Jan. 17.

This event showcases Janesville's vibrant downtown culinary scene where attendees will get to take advantage of special menus, diverse dining experiences, and support their local businesses.

This highly anticipated event invites food lovers and tourists to explore some of the best dining experiences our city has to offer at exclusive

prices.

Participating locations include: Drafthouse, Genisa Wine Bar, Sandwich Bar, Sandee's Thai Fusion, Bodacious Shops of Block 42, O'Riley and Conway's, Franklin Street Tavern, The Looking Glass, and Whiskey Ranch. The menus offered will be a two-course lunch and/or 3-course dinner depending on the participating location.

Some restaurants will offer the Restaurant Week menu through the weekend. It is recommended that anyone interested check with the restaurant directly to confirm. Menus will be announced the first week of January. Anyone interested can find all

updated information on the Facebook event or at downtownjanesville.com.

"Downtown Restaurant Week is a wonderful way for both locals and visitors to experience the diverse cuisine offerings in our downtown area," said Elaina Szyjewski, Managing Director of Downtown Janesville Inc. "Whether you're a food enthusiast or looking to try somewhere new, there's something for everyone to enjoy."

Make reservations today and join the downtown community for this celebratory experience. For more information, visit downtownjanesville.com or email info@downtownjanesville.com.

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Kick off the new year with a first day hike

FROM DNR AND STAFF REPORTS Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) welcomes Wisconsinites to join one of several First-Day Hikes scheduled at state properties on New Year's Day.

And some Green and Rock public libraries, including Evansville, Monticello, Monroe, and Janesville, all listed below, can help you connect to the events.

"Starting the new year in the outdoors is refreshing for both our body and mind, and what better way to kick off the 125th anniversary of the Wisconsin State Park System than by attending a First-Day Hike," stated Steve Schmelzer, DNR Parks and Recreation Management Director, in a press release to Rock Valley Publishing last Friday.

While many properties will be hosting First-Day Hikes around the state, a keystone anniversary celebration will take place at Mirror Lake State Park in Baraboo.

Join staff at the boat launch parking lot for a brief program at 11 a.m., followed by a guided 1.5-mile hike on the Echo Rock and Cliffwood Coulee trails.

Echo Rock Trail is a 0.3-mile universally accessible paved

rail leading to a scenic overlook.

From the overlook, attendees can choose to return to the parking lot or continue onto the Cliffwood Coulee trail. Refreshments will be provided, and a fire will be lit to keep people warm.

First-Day hikes have a specific start time and gathering spot, providing an introduction to winter adventuring for beginner hikers or those new to exploring Wisconsin's natural areas, the DNR release stated.

Experienced hikers are invited to share their knowledge and help build the state's outdoor community. Some guided hikes are pet-free, so check with the property before bringing your furry friends.

Self-guided hikes allow participants to choose their own pace or difficulty level, from gently sloping nature trails to advanced routes.

Drop by anytime during the event window, and property staff may offer maps and recommendations for self-guided adventuring.

Warm clothing, hats, gloves, warm boots or insulated hiking shoes are highly recommended.

Some properties will also have bonfires or warming shelters to



PHOTO COURTESY WISCONSIN DNR Rock Valley Publishing

Celebrate the new year outdoors in Wisconsin by participating in a First Day Hike.

help you fight off the cold.

"First-Day Hikes bring together visitors from all walks of life looking for winter fun. We hope that events like this will inspire passion for the outdoors and a desire to explore our state's natural treasures as we celebrate 125 years of conservation, recreation and memories at Wisconsin state parks, trails and forests," Schmelzer stated. First-Day Hikes are free, but a vehicle admission pass or state trail pass may be required. For those who need a state park

daily admission pass, a free one may be available at your local library.

Monroe Public Library and Monticello Public Library in Green County, also the Eager Free Public Library in Evansville and Hedberg Public Library in Janesville for Rock County all take part in the state admission program. Learn more about participating libraries at wdnr.widen.net/view/pdf/rxovtlcd9x/CheckOut-Parks_by_County.pdf.

Most events include options

beyond hiking, like snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, refreshments and winter activities. Those interested in snowshoe rentals or reserving an outdoor wheelchair should contact the property beforehand. Additionally, check with the property for universally accessible trail conditions.

For details on First Day Hike events, visit the DNR Events calendar at dnr.wisconsin.gov/events?type=First%20Day%20Hike. Note that events may be canceled in cases of inclement

weather.

If a First Day Hike is unavailable in your area, you are still invited to visit a Wisconsin state park, forest, trail or recreation area. Properties are open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. year-round.

First Day Hikes are an initiative from the National Association of State Park Directors to encourage active outdoor recreation on New Year's Day. More events may be added; check the DNR Events calendar for the latest information.



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466004



Serving a special menu New Year's Eve
4:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Surf 'n Turf and a variety of seafood, steaks, & prime rib entrees

Drink Specials

Closed New Year's Day

Reservations Suggested

DNR's Green Tier Program welcomes three new communities

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) celebrates the end of another successful year for the Green Tier Legacy Communities charter with three new members.

The Green Tier Legacy Communities charter is part of the DNR's Green Tier program. Involvement is voluntary for businesses, local governments

and organizations looking to work with the DNR to expand and enhance their sustainability practices. The Green Tier Legacy Communities charter specifically empowers local governments to move toward a sustainable future through initiatives promoting environmental stewardship, economic growth, public health and social equity.

The DNR is excited to officially welcome the city of Sun Prairie, the Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission and the city of Stoughton into the program and looks forward to working with them to improve their communities' environmental performance and outcomes.

Green Tier Legacy Communities (GTLC) is a network that is committed to helping communities pursue actions that result in thriving communities with healthy environments, engaged residents and strong economies. Membership helps

participants access funding opportunities and technical assistance, track their progress over time through annual reporting as well as learn from each other's experiences.

Each new community has demonstrated a commitment to pursuing environmental goals, and joining this charter will enhance their ability to achieve them. By connecting with other members to share their progress and knowledge, Green Tier Legacy Communities help each other become more sustainable and resilient. Some of the goals and accomplishments of the new members include:

- The city of Sun Prairie helped the community reduce the amount of waste going to landfills by increasing the frequency of recycling pickup from biweekly to weekly. The city is promoting renewable energy by installing the first two municipally owned level 2 electric vehicle charging stations for both public and city fleet

vehicles at its City Hall facility and installing the city's largest solar array on the wastewater treatment plant. Sun Prairie's sustainability goals include writing a full climate action plan, completing a greenhouse gas inventory and electrifying 50% of the city's fleet vehicles by 2035.

- Bay Lake Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is a multi-service government entity that delivers a variety of federal, state and local programs to eight counties in northeastern Wisconsin. The commission is available to help member counties and communities in the Bay-Lake region with a variety of long-range planning efforts, including environmental projects such as coastal planning, invasive species management and climate resiliency preparation. The commission is a new type of member for the Legacy Communities charter, and they

See GREEN TIER Page 6



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE Rock Valley Publishing

The city of Sun Prairie recently installed a large solar array at the city's wastewater treatment plant.

Knutes New Years Eve Specials!

Tuesday, December 31, 2024

Prime Rib Buffet	\$25.95
Prime Rib - 16 oz.	\$24.95
Prime Rib - 10 oz.	\$22.95
Prime Rib & Lobster	\$36.95
Lobster - 1 tail 5-6oz.	\$24.95
Lobster - 2 tails 5-6oz.	\$42.95
Steak & Lobster	\$37.95
Tiger Shrimp - X-large	\$18.95
Choice of one - blackened, scampi or battered	
New York Strip - 14 oz.	\$21.95
Bacon Wrapped Filet - 8 oz.	\$27.95
Soup & Salad & Dessert Bar Only	\$10.95
add 3 Jumbo Shrimp	\$8.95

All dinners include soup, salad and dessert bar and choice of potato: baked, twice baked, fries or au gratin.

Reservations Always Accepted and Appreciated



206 E. Beloit St.
Orfordville, WI 53576

Questions?
Call Knutes at
608-879-2011

466010

Kandu launches 2024 annual giving campaign

Non-profit seeks to bridge funding gap for programs for people with disabilities

Kandu Industries Inc., a Rock County, Wis.-based non-profit organization that provides programs and services to people with disabilities and disadvantages, announced on Dec. 18 that it has begun its 2024 annual giving campaign. All proceeds will directly benefit Kandu's mission to create, promote, and provide diverse opportunities offering people with disabilities and disadvantages the ability to pursue greater independence and live more meaningful lives.

Each year, Kandu relies on the generosity of the community to help bridge the gap between government funding and the rising costs of operating and expanding its essential programs.

"As we continue to face the challenges of inflation, in-

creasing demand for services, and rising employee wages and benefits, government funding has not increased," said Kandu Executive Director Kathy Hansen. "This growing financial gap makes it harder for us to provide the vital programs that support individuals with disabilities and their families across southern Wisconsin. In this environment, our reliance on community donations is more critical than ever. We know times are tough for many, but even a small donation can make a significant impact on the lives of those we serve."

Community members can contribute to the campaign by visiting kanduindustries.com to donate. Donations can also be made by texting "give" to 888-617-3927 or by mailing contributions to Kandu Indus-

tries, 15 Plumb Street, Milton, WI 53563.

Kandu's programs provide individuals with disabilities the chance to gain new skills, achieve greater independence, and become integral members of their communities. With the continued support of donors, Kandu can sustain and expand these programs to meet the growing need in the region.

For more information about the 2024 Annual Giving Campaign or to make a donation, please visit kanduindustries.com.

Kandu Industries is a 501(c)(3) organization, based in Rock Co., Wis. that provides opportunities to people with disabilities and disadvantages. For more than 60 years, these work, social, and daily activities enable Kandu

clients to achieve their maximum potential and enjoy the dignity of being productive citizens. Today, the organization impacts the lives of over 200 clients along with a staff of over 100, and partners with a number of community and governmental agencies to ensure that individual choice and personal development are nurtured in the work environment as well as in other aspects of life.

Cotey, a Kandu client, enjoys a moment of living independently while grocery shopping – a dream he's achieved through Kandu's prevocational employment and daily living skills programs.

PHOTO SUBMITTED Rock Valley Publishing



People from state reveal worst festive gift fumbles

Finding the perfect Christmas gift for the woman in your life can be a bit of a minefield; yes, you theoretically should know her well enough by now to be wise to her loves and hates, but it seems that time after time, men just get it a bit (or a lot) wrong. There's the supposedly sexy underwear that's either too big or too small (both are insulting), the item of clothing that is definitely not in her preferred color or style, the perfume set that is definitely not her favorite fragrance, or the recipe book that suggests she should spend more time in the kitchen – looking after him. Sometimes men get it so wrong that their choice of gift could do more than annoy the women they love; it could even bring about the end of their relationship!

Conducting a survey of 3,000 respondents, DatingAdvice wanted to find out which presents Wisconsin women have received that would cause them to call time on their relationship. Men of Wisconsin, if you want to avoid being single over Christmas, we suggest you read this carefully ...

• #1 Personal Hygiene Products: Ah, that slight whiff of suggesting you might have ... a slight whiff about you. Anything from mouthwash to deodorant basically says, 'You stink.'

• #2 Cleaning Supplies or a Vacuum Cleaner: Let's face it, no woman wants to be made to feel as if she's no more than a mere maid, whose only job it is to clean up around her man. We're not in the 1950s anymore, Toto!

• #3 A Diet Book or Weight Loss Program Membership: This gift is particularly thoughtless given that Christmas is one of the times of year that people usually eat the most, splurging on turkey or ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cornbread, cookies, the works! No one wants to receive a gift that makes them think their partner believes they've turned into a tubby butterball, especially after eating one.

• #4 Last-Minute "Panic Gifts" from Drugstores: Nothing says 'I literally gave this no thought' like a generic 'present' from the likes of Walgreens or CVS. From a random perfume gift set to a cheap, own-brand lipstick, these should be avoided at all costs.

• #5 Unrequested Self-Help

books: Woooo boy, this is a screaming no-no, for it suggests that you think something is seriously wrong with your lady love. Yes, many men like to think that they can offer a practical solution to any problem, but this, my friends, is not the way to do it. Unless your partner is genuinely seeking help for a specific issue – from giving up smoking to getting over the death of a pet – avoid this at all costs.

• #6 A Cookbook For Beginners: Want to subtly, or perhaps not so-subtly, tell someone that you don't like their cooking? Then consider giving them a cookbook, especially one designed for beginners and particularly if they didn't put this on their wish list. Men, this will go down as well as burnt toast if you choose it for your partner.

• #7 A Book On Improving Social Skills: Any book on life skills, or social etiquette could be seen as a negative critique on someone, even if you have the best intentions. There is no quicker way to get on someone's bad side than by gifting a book that could potentially be seen as a criticism of their personality or decision making.

• #8 Fitness Equipment Or Gym Membership: Many of us have weight loss goals set for our New Year's resolution or plan on taking out a gym membership come 2025 – while it may seem like a good idea to cover the cost of this for someone you love it could also be seen as a big insult. To that end, its best to steer clear of any fitness related gifts, such as at home gym equipment, gym clothes, or health supplements unless someone specifically requests these.

The survey also had some other interesting findings; the main thing that partners said was the hardest part about buying gifts for women was: 'She already has everything' (28%) – patently not true, just ask her for ideas if you're stuck! Another 23% lamely said, 'I have no idea what she likes' – er, hello, you're dating her – if you don't know by now, you never will. Clearly, you're just not paying attention to her. Another 17% said both 'She drops hints I can never pick up on' (sigh) and 'She's impossible to shop for,' (really!?) while some scrooges out there (16%) claimed 'She has expensive taste.'

The most last-minute gift women have ever received was a gift card with the

amount written in pen (42%). Nearly a quarter (22%) said they received a supposedly 'thoughtful' IOU, which essentially just says the man couldn't be bothered. Even worse, 19% gave something they got at the gas station, and most pathetic of all, 17% got a random item from their own closet!

Women can be very forgiving, however, and over a third

(38%) said they would put the situation behind them if they got an amazing, surprise, follow-up gift (unlikely, if DatingAdvice's survey is anything to go by). Tying at 31% was a heartfelt apology (okay, plenty of groveling) and a romantic dinner or similarly sweet gesture.

It's not like women expect something expensive and unattainable, either; if their

partner had to buy a gift on a budget, 28% said they would appreciate something homemade and thoughtful, while 25% would be over the moon with a sincere love letter. Another 20% would love a cozy blanket or candles for relaxing, 15% would be very happy with a subscription for a small indulgence, like coffee or chocolates, and 13% would just love a simple but mean-

ingful piece of jewelry.

Finally, if their partner could have one gift-free Christmas, what they would like to do instead would be spending the entire day together with no distractions (31%), followed by planning a romantic getaway (28%) or cooking an amazing holiday meal (26%). Another 15% said they would want him to write them a love letter or heartfelt card.

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Over \$1.6 million in state re-gift presents

One of the best things about Christmas, especially when you're a child, is receiving gifts. Particularly when you've carefully crafted a list for Santa beforehand, detailing exactly what you would want! Now, Santa doesn't always deliver to the letter, but by and large, you grow up getting what you asked for. However, that doesn't always happen, and it's more and more likely the older you get. Even if the gifter means well, the end result can be the desire to give it away to someone else, as soon as possible (or - if it's worth a dollar or three - to sell it instead). Indeed, even if inflation has cooled recently, prices

have remained stubbornly high in 2024, offering the average American a financial incentive to regift or resell an unwanted gift - known as the 'regifting economy.'

To figure out the value of America's regifting economy, BadCredit.org surveyed 3,000 people to estimate the value of America's regifting economy. It turns out it is pretty significant: the regifting economy is worth a staggering \$11 billion for the whole country, with 43% of Americans (over 110 million people) admitting to regifting or reselling unwanted presents. California generates the biggest regifting economy,

at \$1,377,846,471.

Wisconsin's regifting economy also turns out to be substantial - when interviewed, 37% of Wisconsinites say they plan on profiting from gifts received this festive season, equating to 1,690,533 regifters in the state. This means that Wisconsin's regifting/reselling economy is worth \$176,660,712!

When ranked proportionally by population, the data reveals Rhode Islanders as the nation's top regifters, whereby 83% say they plan to move on unwanted Christmas gifts this year. They were followed by Nevadans (59%) and New Yorkers (56%).

The top 10 regifting states

- (by percentage of regifters and size of regifting economy) are:
- 1. Rhode Island (83%; \$74,443,219)
 - 2. Nevada (59%; \$154,587,138)
 - 3. New York (56%; \$886,249,898)
 - 4. Arizona (54%; \$324,811,122)
 - 5. Utah (53%; \$147,483,264)
 - 6. Louisiana (52%; \$192,416,145)
 - 7. Maryland (52%; \$259,508,823)
 - 8. Massachusetts (51%; \$291,977,877)
 - 9. Wyoming (50%; \$23,803,243)

- 10. Georgia (45%; \$407,946,082)

The survey also found that 71% know immediately when opening a gift that they will never, ever use or wear it. Interestingly, 38% of Wisconsinites think it is morally wrong to sell or regift a present they've received. And nearly half have felt regret or guilt after regifting or reselling a present - maybe it was from someone special, and they felt they were defrauding them somehow.

The survey also revealed that an unfortunate 48% have been caught regifting or selling a present... awkward!

"Regifting or reselling has

become a smart financial strategy for budget-conscious consumers this holiday season," says Jon McDonald, senior editor at BadCredit.org. "As Americans navigate economic challenges, regifting has shed its previous stigma and gained mainstream acceptance. What was once considered taboo is now a resourceful way to manage holiday expenses while ensuring gifts find appreciative new homes."

BadCredit.org calculated the percentage planning to regift or resell, applied it to the total adult population, and multiplied it by the average gift spend of \$104.50 per person.

Area news and events in brief

Blood drive will be at UWW of Rock County

A Red Cross blood drive will be held in the Fank Holt Gymnasium on UW-White-water at Rock County's campus on Jan. 3, 2025, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

This event is open to anyone who can donate blood. Donating blood allows the participants to claim a limited-quantity long sleeved T-shirt from the Red Cross. This promotion ends on Jan. 3, so URock's blood drive will be the last chance to claim one of these shirts.

To schedule an appointment go to www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zip=Sponsor=UWWRock but walk-ins are welcome as well.

To save time, complete a pre-donation reading and health history at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or with the Blood Donor App before the appointment.

In-person job fair at Rock County Job Center

The first Job Fair for 2025 in Rock County will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 14 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Rock County Job Center located at 1717 Center Ave. in Janesville. The event will have 26 local employers

in attendance and 300+ job openings.

Individuals may update and print their resumes in the Resource Room prior to the event. A list of employers can be found at: <https://wisconsinjobcenter.org/events/>. Individuals having questions can email DETWDA11Business-Services@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

Women's winter walking group starts in January

There will be a women's walking group that will start in January 2025. Those interested in joining in should meet at the Pearl Island Trail parking lot off Decatur Road at 4 p.m. at W464 Decatur Road, Brodhead. The group will walk for an hour.

The walking dates are Jan. 6, 13, 20, and 27. If there is enough interest they can continue through the winter.

Those with questions can contact Anne Corbit at 608-558-6882.

ATV Safety Education Course coming soon

Sheriff Fell is pleased to announce that the Rock County Sheriff's Office will offer their first 2025 ATV Safety Education Course on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025, from 6 to

7 p.m., and Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Rock County Sheriff's Office, 200 East U.S. Highway 14, Janesville. Students must attend both sessions to graduate.

Anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 1988, is required to complete an ATV Safety Education Course to legally operate an ATV or UTV in areas open to the public within Wisconsin. Students should be at least 12 years of age or turn 12 shortly after the class.

Registration is now open. Complete the online enrollment form to reserve a seat at <https://www.co.rock.wi.us/departments/sheriff-s-office/recreational-patrol/atv-education>

Class size is limited to 30 students. Upon submission of the registration form, the submitter will see an onscreen confirmation message with course information.

The course fee of \$10 per student will be collected at the first session. If the student is under 18 years old, a parent/guardian will need to attend the first session with the student. Students will receive course materials at the first session. Please direct any questions to Deputy Trevor

Lund at trevor.lund@co.rock.wi.us.

Grief support group coming on Mondays

The Aging and Disability Resource Centers of Rock and Marquette Counties are offering the 16-week grief and bereavement educational support group on Monday afternoons from 2 to 4 p.m. beginning Jan. 13 and running through April 28. This is a virtual group. There is no cost to attend. Registration and screening are required.

Who is this group for? The group is for anyone who is or has cared for someone with dementia. Caring for someone with dementia presents a constant series of losses and not just those related to death. Each session will cover a grief, loss and mourning topic followed by about 60 minutes of conventional support group discussion.

For more information or to register, please contact Rock County Dementia Care Specialist, Karen Tennyson at 608/921-7165 or karen.tennyson@co.rock.wi.us

Upper Iowa University announces graduates

Upper Iowa University

is pleased to announce the names of its July 2024 graduates. The honored students included:

- Melisa Graves of Janesville
- Israel Morales of Beloit
- Luis Perez of Beloit
- Cassandra Rugg of Monroe

Upper Iowa University is pleased to announce the names of its August 2024 graduates.

- Meredith Johnson of Beloit
- Hailey Landphier of Janesville

Founded in 1857, Upper Iowa University is a private, nonprofit university providing undergraduate and graduate degree programs to roughly 5,500 students-nationally and internationally-at its Fayette, Iowa, Campus, and education centers through the U.S. Upper Iowa University is a recognized innovator in offering accredited, affordable, and quality programs through flexible, multiple delivery systems, including online and self-paced degree programs. With a focus on developing leaders and lifelong learners, UIU provides dual enrollment programs for high school students as well as continuing education and professional development opportunities for learners of any age. For more information, visit www.uiu.edu.

the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) from specimens collected from the presumptive positive human case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A(H5), also known as bird flu, in Barron County. Results confirm HPAI A(H5), and the case will now be reported as a confirmed human case of HPAI A(H5).

New Glarus native named to dean's list

Alexah Mellenberger of New Glarus has been named to Central College's Fall 2024 Dean's List. Mellenberger, Class of 2025, is among the 411 students named to the Fall Dean's List.

To qualify for this honor, students must earn a 3.5 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale while taking 12 or more graded credit hours for the semester.

Central College of Pella, Iowa, is a private college known for its active student body, academic rigor and athletics success. The students learn collaboratively with supportive educators who share a commitment to intellectual engagement, personal growth, career readiness and civic involvement. Founded in 1853 and shaped by its Christian heritage, the college of 1,100 students participates in NCAA Division III athletics and is a member of the American Rivers Conference. Central is an active part of the Greater Des Moines region and just minutes from Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake.

LEGAL NOTICES

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT GREEN COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF GREGORY GRAY Deceased

Notice to Creditors (Informal Administration) Case No. 24PR94

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:

1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 01/23/1961 and date of death 10/21/2024, was domiciled in Green County, State of WI, with a mailing address of 205 East 4th Avenue, Brodhead, WI 53520.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is March 5, 2025.
5. A claim may be filed at the Green County Justice Center County Courthouse, 2841 6th Street, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.

Electronically signed by Jennifer Prien Probate Registrar November 25, 2024

Catherine Gray 205 East 4th Avenue Brodhead, WI 53520 608-290-4811

The Independent Register 12/11, 12/18, 12/25/2024 WNAXLP 465226

PUBLIC NOTICE

POOL & REC DIRECTOR CITY OF BRODHEAD

The position requires the ability to manage the recreation and pool functions, including the development of recreation programs, operational, and developmental phases of pool, recreation areas and facilities. This position offers a wage which is commensurate with experience and qualifications, plus an excellent fringe benefit package.

Preferred qualifications include an Associate's degree in physical education, recreation, or related fields. Knowledge of pool maintenance, ability to obtain pool & spa operators certification, CPR/First Aid certified, recreational knowledge to develop and maintain programs and develop staff.

For a job description visit: http://www.cityofbrodheadwi.us/employment_opportunities/index.php

To apply send a cover letter, resume, salary requirements, and three professional references by January 17, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. to: City Clerk; City of Brodhead, 1111 W. 2nd Ave., Brodhead, Wisconsin 53520 or email to cityclerk@cityofbrodheadwi.us.

The Independent Register 12/25/2024, 1/1, 1/8, 1/15/2025 WNAXLP 465988

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CITY OF BRODHEAD

RE: Vacation, Abandonment and Discontinuance of a portion of a public street in the City of Brodhead, Green County, Wisconsin, described as follows:

That part of E 7th Avenue located within the Original Plat of the City of Brodhead, Green County, Wisconsin described as follows: bounded on the east by the west boundaries Dicksons Addition CSM 4305 (V17-P206) Lot 1 BNG PRT Lots 1 & 2 & All Lots 7 & 8, BLK 10 and Dicksons Addition Block 10 Lots 3-6, bounded on the north by 2nd St, bounded on the west by Dicksons Addition Block 26 Lots 1 & 2 and Dicksons Addition Block 26 Lots 3 & 4 and bounded on the south by 3rd St.

Reserving a permanent utility easement including for such purpose the right to operate necessary equipment thereon, and the right of reasonable ingress and egress to maintain said utilities.

Notice is hereby given that there has been a preliminary resolution by the Common Council of the City of Brodhead on December 16, 2024, tentatively vacating and discontinuing the portion of the platted public street described above in the city.

1. This preliminary resolution is subject to the passage of the final resolution by the common council after the public hearing scheduled for such consideration to be held on January 20, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. in the Common Council Chambers of the City of Brodhead located at 1111 West 2nd Avenue, Brodhead, Wisconsin.
2. All persons, their agents or attorneys will be given an opportunity to be heard relative thereto.

Dated this 20th day of December 2024.

CITY OF BRODHEAD

Kristin Covert, City Clerk

The Independent Register 12/25/2024, 1/1, 1/8/2025 WNAXLP 466024

STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT GREEN COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF CHARLES W. PAX

Notice to Creditors (Informal Administration) Case No. 24PR95

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:

1. An application for informal administration was filed.
2. The decedent, with date of birth 01/08/1958 and date of death 12/18/2019 was domiciled in Green County, State of Wisconsin, with a mailing address of W542 Myrt Lane, Brodhead, WI 53520.
3. All interested persons waived notice.
4. The deadline for filing a claim against the decedent's estate is March 26, 2025.
5. A claim may be filed at the Green County Justice Center County Courthouse, 2841 6th St., Monroe, Wisconsin, Room Probate Office.

Electronically signed by Jennifer Prien Probate Registrar

Michael A. Faust Consigny Law Firm, S.C. 303 East Court Street, Janesville, WI 53545 (608) 755-5050 Bar Number 1024665

The Independent Register 12/25/2024, 1/1, 1/8/2025 WNAXLP 466026

Wisconsin human HPAI case confirmed by CDC

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has received test results from

Green Tier

(Continued from page 4)

are excited about the potential collaboration opportunities that will come out of this partnership.

- The city of Stoughton has completed multiple projects related to energy reduction including the installation of an electric vehicle charging station in the City Hall parking lot, the conversion of all Main Street lights to LEDs and upgrading multiple pieces of equipment across municipal buildings to more efficient versions. The city's utility, Stoughton Utilities, has received national recognition nine times from the National Renewable Energy

Laboratory for its green power participation and was recognized as a Dane County Climate Champion in 2023. The city formed its Sustainability Committee in 2021 to develop a formal sustainability plan. Approved in November 2024 by the Stoughton City Council, the plan mirrors the environmental priorities of other Legacy Communities and includes goals for energy and emissions, water quality and conservation, transportation systems and community health.

Learn more about Green Tier Legacy Communities on the DNR's Green Tier webpage.

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The City of Brodhead is accepting applications for a full-time position as the **Streets & Parks Supervisor**. Applicant must have a valid driver's license and a willingness to obtain CDL license at the time of application. This position offers a wage which is commensurate with experience and qualifications, plus an excellent benefit package.

Essential duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following: Principles and practices of street and storm sewer maintenance, forestry maintenance, supervises maintenance of and improvements to all city parks, knowledge of electrical systems, supervision and training of staff. Required on-call time Monday through Sunday on a rotating schedule.

Complete job description is available on the city's website at www.cityofbrodheadwi.us, or may be picked up at City Hall. Please drop off your resume at Brodhead City Hall or mail to: City of Brodhead, PO Box 168, Brodhead, WI 53520-0168, or email to cityclerk@cityofbrodheadwi.us. Applications will be accepted through Monday, Jan. 17, 2025.

The City of Brodhead is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

465847

Wastewater Supervisor

The City of Brodhead is accepting applications for a full-time position as the **Wastewater Supervisor**. Applicant must have a valid driver's license at the time of application, with a willingness to obtain CDL license. This position offers a wage which is commensurate with experience and qualifications, plus an excellent fringe benefit package.

Essential duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following: Street maintenance, DNR certification with sub-classes, sanitary sewer maintenance, wastewater facility maintenance, principles of electrical systems, supervision and training of staff, and an ability to learn and understand plant operations and laboratory testing. Required on-call time Monday through Sunday on a rotating schedule.

Complete job description is available on the city's website at www.cityofbrodheadwi.us, or may be picked up at City Hall. Please drop off your resume at Brodhead City Hall or mail to: City of Brodhead, PO Box 168, Brodhead, WI 53520-0168, or email to cityclerk@cityofbrodheadwi.us. Applications will be accepted through Monday, Jan. 17, 2025.

The City of Brodhead is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

465848

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DISCLAIMER NOTICE This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance.

Burial Needs

7 CEMETERY PLOTS Willing to sell as a group or individually. Located at Roselawn Memory Gardens 3045 WI-67, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. **This is a private sale.** Contact Randy, the seller at randy@slpublishers.com.

Furniture

NEW "WAYFAIR" ENTERTAINMENT center, decorable book shelf, dark wood. Still in carton-heavy. Asking \$99. Very nice. Too big for space to put it in. 608-705-3031

Misc. For Sale

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Write your ad below, One Word Per Box, be sure to include your price

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ADDRESS _____

323503

DNR celebrates successful elk hunting season

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) celebrates a successful elk hunting season. The state's seventh managed elk hunt opened on Saturday, Oct. 12 and concluded Friday, Dec. 20.

The 2024 hunt represented a milestone in Wisconsin's elk management. For the first time, hunters had the opportunity to hunt in both the Northern and Central Elk zones. Previous hunts only occurred within the Northern Elk Zone.

"It's exciting hunters have the opportunity to pursue elk in our home state," said Christina Kizewski, DNR Wildlife Biologist. "Each year, every hunter experiences something unique and memorable, but especially this year with the first opportunities to hunt elk in the Central Elk Zone. The fact that the population is now at a level that allows for a limited hunt underscores the successful management of Wisconsin's healthy and growing elk herd."

The eight Wisconsin hunters who participated in this year's hunt were randomly selected from a pool of more than 25,500 applicants. The DNR received 17,761 applications to hunt in the Northern Elk Zone and 7,750 applications for the Central Elk Zone. The random drawing ensures that each applicant has an equal chance of selection within the respective management zones. Applicants were required to identify their



PHOTO COURTESY WISCONSIN DNR *Rock Valley Publishing*

Friday, Dec. 20, marked the close of Wisconsin's seventh managed elk hunt, which allowed hunters to hunt in both elk management zones for the first time since reintroduction.

management zone of choice during the elk hunting application process.

In the Central Elk Zone, all four hunters successfully harvested a bull elk on the third day of the season. Two hunters in the Northern Elk Zone successfully harvested a bull elk, and Ojibwe Tribal hunters met their four-bull harvest declaration. Of interest, a 10-year-old mentored hunter was able to

harvest a mature northern Wisconsin bull elk.

How to apply for next elk hunting season

The DNR's elk management is supported by the revenue received through hunter application fees, which contribute directly to the future of the state's elk population. For each \$10 application fee, \$7 goes directly toward elk manage-

ment, habitat restoration and research.

The 2025 elk hunt application period for Wisconsin residents is expected to open in early spring and run through May 31, 2025. During the application process, hunters must select which management zone they would like to hunt in.

For more information on elk in Wisconsin, visit the DNR's Elk in Wisconsin webpage.

RCSO: Scam caller impersonating deputy

The Rock County Sheriff's Office was made aware of recent fraudulent phone calls to citizens within Rock County and the surrounding areas where the caller identifies themselves as a Rock County Deputy. The caller(s) indicate the person needs to send them money to clear up a legal matter.

These phone calls are fraudulent in nature, and RCSO warns the public that neither the Sheriff's Office nor their representatives will call citizens asking for money. The Rock County Sheriff's Office encourages the public to let their family and friends know about these scams. In the past, the callers have even set up mailboxes identifying themselves as Rock County Sheriff's Office personnel so when the person tries to return the call it appears to be real.

Anyone receiving calls of this nature is urged to report it to the Rock County Communications Center at 608-757-2244. People should always use caution and are reminded not to give personal information or pay monies via phone unless they can verify the source of origin.

Highly pathogenic avian flu confirmed in state

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has identified a case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI H5N1) in a backyard poultry flock in Kenosha County. DATCP and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) animal health officials are working together in a joint incident response.

The affected premises will not move poultry or poultry products, and birds on the property will be depopulated to prevent the spread of the disease. Birds from the flock will not enter the food system. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HPAI does not present an immediate public health concern for non-poultry workers. HPAI also does not pose a food safety risk; properly handling and cooking eggs and poultry to an internal temperature of 165°F kills the virus.

The H5N1 HPAI virus has continued to circulate in both wild and domestic birds in North America since December 2021. H5N1 HPAI viruses are highly contagious and often fatal to domestic poultry. Caused by influenza type A viruses, the disease varies in severity depending on the strain and species affected. The disease can be spread by contact with infected birds, commingling with wild birds or their droppings, equipment, or clothing worn by anyone working with the animals.

DATCP continues to urge all livestock owners to implement strong biosecurity measures to protect their flocks and herds from the disease. This includes washing hands, disinfecting equipment, restricting access to animals, and separating new additions to the flock or herd for at least 30 days. Poultry owners are asked, when possible, to keep their birds indoors.

When HPAI H5N1 is diagnosed in a Wisconsin poultry flock, a control area is established within a 10 kilometer area around the infected premises, restricting movement on or off any premises with poultry. To help producers determine if their poultry are located within an active control area or surveillance zone, poultry owners are encouraged to use DATCP's mapping tool.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and county public health entities are monitoring exposed farm

workers for HPAI symptoms. The risk to the general public in Wisconsin remains low. Prevention information for farmworkers or others who have close contact with birds, dairy cows, or other relevant animals can be found under Protective Actions for People. Farm workers, businesses, and processors can request a limited supply of surplus personal protective equipment (PPE) through the Wisconsin DHS Office of Preparedness and Emergency Health Care. For more information, visit Office of Preparedness and Emergency Health Care: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/preparedness/medical-stockpile.htm>.

DATCP reminds Wisconsin livestock owners to register their premises. State law requires that all livestock owners register where their animals are kept. Registration helps animal health officials communicate with flock and herd owners during disease outbreaks.

To report increased mortality or signs of illness among domestic birds, dairy cattle, or other animals, contact DATCP at 608-224-4872 during business hours or 800-943-0003 after hours and during weekends. For updates on how the virus is affecting domestic birds in Wisconsin, and to find resources on protecting Wisconsin poultry, visit DATCP's HPAI in Poultry webpage online at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/HPAIWisconsin.aspx.

H5N1 in other species

The HPAI H5N1 virus has continued to circulate in both wild and domestic birds in North America since December 2021. Since that time, the H5N1 virus has also affected other species, including mammalian species. A specific genotype of H5N1 virus was first detected in dairy cattle earlier this year in Texas. To date, Wisconsin has not identified an H5N1 infection in dairy herds in the state. DATCP continues to work with USDA to conduct testing for H5N1, encourage biosecurity, and provide resources to producers.

For updates on how the H5N1 virus is affecting dairy cattle across the country, and to find resources on protecting Wisconsin dairy cattle, visit DATCP's H5N1 in Dairy Cattle webpage: https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AvianInfluenzaCattle.aspx.

Celebrate the season by giving blood or platelets

December is a time to close out the year by making new memories. With just one week left in 2024, the American Red Cross asks donors to give blood or platelets now to help those in need enjoy the rest of the holiday season with loved ones. Donors with type O negative blood and those giving platelets are especially urged to give now so patients can continue to receive the care they count on in the coming weeks.

This is a busy time for many. In addition to travel, seasonal illness and the threat of winter weather can also lead to lower appointment numbers and decreased donor turnout, making it tougher to keep the blood supply stable. Those who give regularly and those looking to give for the first time are encouraged to take one hour this December to help save lives

with a blood or platelet donation.

Those who come to give before Jan. 3, 2025, will receive an exclusive Red Cross long-sleeved T-shirt, while supplies last.

To extend a special thank-you to donors for helping address the need for blood, platelets and plasma during the critical post-holiday time, those who come to give Jan. 1 to 26, 2025, during National Blood Donor Month, will be automatically entered for a chance to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

Green County Brodhead

- Monday, Jan. 6, 2025: Noon to 5 p.m., Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 405 E. 9th Ave.

Brooklyn

- Saturday, Dec. 28: 8 a.m. to noon, Brooklyn Fire EMS, 401 W. Main

Monroe

- Friday, Jan. 3, 2025: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., St. John's United Church of Christ, 1724 14th St.

New Glarus

- Friday, Dec. 27: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., New Glarus Bible Church, 207 6th St.

Rock County Edgerton

- Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. Joseph Catholic Church, 590 S. St. Joseph Circle

Janesville

- Monday, Dec. 30: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Marian Hall, 1236 E.

Racine St.

- Monday, Dec. 30: 1 to 6 p.m., St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 210 S. Ringold St.

- Tuesday, Dec. 31: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 210 S. Ringold St.

- Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Uptown Janesville, 2500 Milton Ave.

- Friday, Jan. 3, 2025: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., UW-Rock County Wells Cultural Center, 2909 Kellogg Ave.

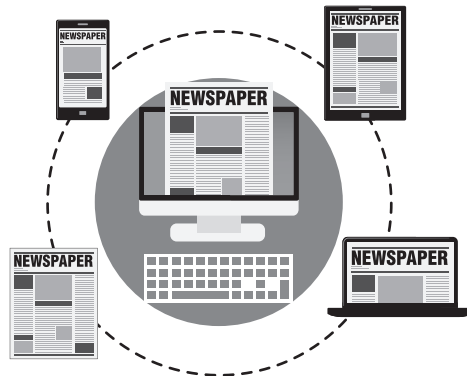
- Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dr. Daniel Hale Williams Rock County Resource Center, 1717 Center Ave.

Milton

- Friday, Dec. 27: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Hope Lutheran Church, 335 Dairyland Drive

- Friday, Jan. 17, 2025: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., St. Mary's Center, 837 Parkview

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