



● **ROBERT W. WIRCH**

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

**April 30, 2021**



**Dear friend,**

**Happy Arbor Day. Arbor Day “grew” out of an idea by Julius Sterling Morton, a former U.S. Agriculture Secretary and nature lover who had a passion for planting trees. The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska City, Nebraska; it’s estimated that about one million trees were planted that day. By 1885, Arbor Day had become a Nebraska state holiday. Within twenty years it had become a holiday in every state but Delaware, which joined in shortly after. Schools across the country began celebrating Arbor Day by dedicating trees they planted to special people, a tradition that has continued and spread. You can learn more about the history of Arbor Day and different ways to celebrate at <https://celebratearborday.com/>. As always, stay safe and stay healthy.**

**Sincerely,**

*Bob*

## In Case You Missed It

# small business **SPOTLIGHT**



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### ***Kenosha Incubator Community Kitchen, K.I.C.K., Opens, Allowing Aspiring Entrepreneurs to Pursue Their Dreams***



A great new resource for Kenosha foodies is now open. The Kenosha Incubator Community Kitchen, or K.I.C.K., offers would-be cooks and bakers a chance to take their culinary experience to another level. Run by the Kenosha Harbor Market, K.I.C.K. allows aspiring chefs to rent the space for an hourly rate, depending on need. People looking to start a home-based food business can use the commercial kitchen to prepare their wares for sale. Andrea Forgianni, the executive director of the Kenosha Harbor Market, says, "...It's going to be an amazing facility that helps local small businesses, food producers in particular, to establish, grow and thrive." Because of its partnership with Kenosha Harbor Market, anyone who is part of the incubator kitchen will be required to sell their goods at the market. To get a cost estimate, email [info@kenoshaharbormarket.com](mailto:info@kenoshaharbormarket.com).



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## ***Governor Evers Announces \$21 Million in Utility Payment Assistance***

More than 36,000 Wisconsin residents and families facing utility payment arrearages are receiving additional assistance through an allocation announced this week by Governor Tony Evers. More than \$21 million will be used to pay off the past-due amount for these eligible utility customers through the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). Eligible households did not need to apply; in order to provide the assistance, the arrearage on accounts as of April 9, 2021, were paid off based on information provided by utility customers on their previously submitted Program Year 2020-2021 WHEAP application. For more information on WHEAP, go to t <http://www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov/>. Utility customers experiencing other housing or home energy needs can contact 1-800-506-5596 or [support@wheap.help](mailto:support@wheap.help).

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## ***Wisconsin COVID Vaccination Rates Trending Down; State Reports Most Single-Day Deaths in More Than Two Months***

As feared, vaccinations in the state are slowing down appreciably and “vaccine hesitancy” becomes an issue with the remaining unvaccinated population. Supply is exceeding demand; in fact, the Regency Mall vaccination site in Racine is no longer requiring appointments. Meanwhile, COVID hospitalizations and ICU admissions are up, and on Wednesday, the state reported 34 new Covid deaths, the highest single-day total in more than two months.

Kenosha County operates a Covid-19 Vaccine Call Center. The call center is open to people who don't have access to schedule a vaccination appointment online. These people can call (262)605-6799 to speak with someone who will walk them through the appointment process, if they are eligible. The online list of Kenosha County Covid vaccine providers is still available, at <http://bit.ly/KCCCOVIDHub>, as well. The new Kenosha County Covid Vaccination Clinic site, located inside the former Shopko at 5300 52nd St., is now operational. You can use the above link to find appointment times.

The Grace Welcome Center in Kenosha, 2006 60th St., will be hosting a Kenosha County Health Department vaccination clinic on April 13, 20 and 27 and May 4, from 2:00 - 5:30 pm. No appointments are necessary.

People in Racine can sign up for email updates on vaccination progress at <https://crchd.com/covid-19-vaccine>. A list of Racine area vaccination providers is available at <https://crchd.com/covid-19-vaccine#Locations>. Festival Hall has been opened up as a vaccination clinic site. Use the first link to receive information on vaccination appointment availability.



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## ***Some Who Declined to Return to Unsafe Jobs Due to Covid Could Now Be Eligible for Unemployment Benefits***

Tens of thousands of Wisconsin residents who were initially denied Covid-19 pandemic unemployment benefits may now qualify for up to 79 weeks of backpay as a result of an executive order signed in February by President Joe Biden. There are three main categories of newly-eligible workers: 1) Those who declined to return to work at a site that wasn't complying with Covid-19 safety standards, such as requiring face masks and physical distancing; 2) Those working for an educational institution who became unemployed after Covid-19 messed with workers' schedules; and 3) Those who were laid off or had their hours reduced as a result of Covid-19 measures, including restaurant workers. The state Department of Workforce Development will be mailing notices to about 28,000 people who were denied benefits under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program to let them know they are eligible to reapply under the expanded guidelines. If they were denied before but found to be eligible now, it's possible they could be paid for the entire period of the pandemic so far. Wisconsinites who were not previously denied federal PUA can also apply under the expanded eligibility; however, they will be limited in the number of weeks of backpay they can claim.

# **KENOSHA NEWS**

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## **The Journal Times**

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## ***Guest Commentary on Medical Marijuana***

This week, but the Kenosha News and Racine Journal-Times published my guest commentary in support of medical marijuana legalization. Legislative Democrats, Governor Evers, and an overwhelming number of Wisconsinites support medical marijuana; why are Republican legislators still putting up roadblocks? Read more at

[https://www.kenoshanews.com/opinion/columnists/commentary-wirch-republicans-ignore-constituents-pain-as-they-block-medical-marijuana/article\\_edf57d3f-2362-54bb-9441-d308964feaf1.html](https://www.kenoshanews.com/opinion/columnists/commentary-wirch-republicans-ignore-constituents-pain-as-they-block-medical-marijuana/article_edf57d3f-2362-54bb-9441-d308964feaf1.html) or [https://journaltimes.com/print\\_specific/column/commentary-by-state-sen-robert-wirch-republican-leaders-ignore-constituents-pain-as-they-block-medical/article\\_62c07b78-82cf-562e-b5a7-a37d573e2b6a.html](https://journaltimes.com/print_specific/column/commentary-by-state-sen-robert-wirch-republican-leaders-ignore-constituents-pain-as-they-block-medical/article_62c07b78-82cf-562e-b5a7-a37d573e2b6a.html).



## ***Joint Finance Committee Finishes Budget Listening Sessions; Public Support for Badger Bounceback Budget Overwhelming***

The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee completed its round of public listening sessions on the 2021-2023 state budget with a virtual session on Wednesday. Heading into Wednesday's event, public testimony at the previous four public meetings had been 284-30 in support of Governor Evers' budget proposal. It's a true testament to the fact that the people of Wisconsin want and need the investments in public education, our economy, health care, our communities and the environment the Badger Bounceback Budget makes. If you weren't able to attend one of the in-person listening sessions or the virtual hearings and want to comment on the budget, you can find a listing of Joint Finance Committee members, including co-chairs Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and Rep. Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam), with contact information, at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/committees/joint/2293>.





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***Those Needing a “Real ID” for Flying Now Have Until May 2023***

Due to Covid-19, those needing a Real ID-compliant ID card or driver’s license for flying or other purposes now have until May 2023 to obtain one, pushed back from the October 2021 deadline. Congress passed the REAL ID Act in 2005 to establish minimum security standards for state-issued drivers’ licenses and ID cards following recommendations from the 9/11 Commission. The updated cards will be required for airport check-in and to enter federal facilities. The implementation date has been pushed back a number of times. To find out more about Real ID and the requirements to obtain a compliant license, go to <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/how-to-apply/realid.aspx>.

**BADGER BOUNCEBACK**

**LIVE SESSIONS**

***Budget News and Details***

To read a detailed and in-depth analysis of Governor Evers’ budget proposal, you can visit the Department of Administration’s Executive Budget page, <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/2021-23%20Executive%20Budget.aspx>. You can also find a nonpartisan analysis of the Governor’s budget proposal by the Legislative Reference Bureau at [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lrb/010\\_2021\\_budget\\_bill\\_analysis.pdf](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lrb/010_2021_budget_bill_analysis.pdf).

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## ***Questions About Your Federal Stimulus Payments?***

If you have questions about the latest round of federal stimulus or have reason to believe that your check was misdirected or lost in the mail, contact Congressman Bryan Steil. His staff is best positioned to offer assistance. Congressman Steil's Kenosha office can be reached at (262)654-1901, and his Racine office number is (262)637-0510.



## ***Local Covid Testing Options***

There are a number of options locally for anyone looking to get tested. Your primary health care provider is always an option, but there are many community testing sites available, as well.

**CVS Pharmacy:** Drive-through testing available at CVS in Kenosha (3710 57th Ave.) and Racine (3915 Durand Ave.); advance registration required at <https://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing>

**Froedert South:** Drive-through testing is available to those who qualify after completing an initial phone evaluation at (262)671-7777 between 8 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday

**Kenosha Community Medical Center:** A drive-through testing site at the former Chase Bank, 5506 Seventh Ave., is open to patients who complete a quick registration process at <https://www.kenoshachc.org/covid-19-resource-center/>. Testing is conducted Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 am to 4 pm.

**Old Kenosha Fire Station No. 3:** Free, drive-through testing will be offered during the following hours at the former No. 3 Fire Station, 2121 Roosevelt Rd., Kenosha: Tuesdays, 2-6 pm; Thursdays, 2-6 pm; Saturdays, 9 am - 1 pm. This testing is being offered in a partnership between locally-owned Modern Apothecary, the Wisconsin DHS, and the Kenosha Fire Department. An appointment and preregistration is strongly encouraged, with appointment times available at <https://modernapothecary.10to8.com> and registration available at <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov>. Anyone who lives or works in Wisconsin, ages 5 and over, can be tested.





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UW System schools statewide, including Parkside, have been provided with a limited number of rapid-result Covid-19 tests. These tests provide results in 15-30 minutes. The tests are free of charge and available to the public, and you don't have to have symptoms to get a test. A positive rapid test will need to be confirmed with the regular Covid-19 test but will provide you some guidance on whether or not you need to quarantine during that period. Registration at <https://www.doineedacovid19test.com> is required. The tests are administered in De Simone Gym in the SAC on the Parkside campus Monday-Thursday, 9 am - 5 pm, and Friday, 9 am - 1 pm. Testing is expected to last at least several weeks.

<https://www.uwp.edu/explore/news/surge-testing.cfm>

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