

**August 20, 2021**



**Dear friend,**

**Senior citizens are an active and vital part of our community. They have spent their lives contributing to society, and their experience and wisdom are valuable assets to all of us. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed August 21 National Senior Citizens Day, to recognize all that they offer and raise awareness of unique issues affecting them and their quality of life. “For all they have achieved in their life and for all they continue to accomplish, we owe older citizens our thanks and a heartfelt salute. We can best demonstrate our gratitude and esteem by making sure that our communities are good places in which to mature and grow older – places in which people can participate to the fullest and can find the encouragement, acceptance, assistance and services they need to continue to lead lives of independence and dignity,” Reagan said then, and it remains true today. Take the time to reach out to an older family member, whether in person, by phone, letter, Zoom. Let them know you’re thinking of them and that you appreciate them. Stay safe and healthy.**

**Sincerely,**

*Bob*

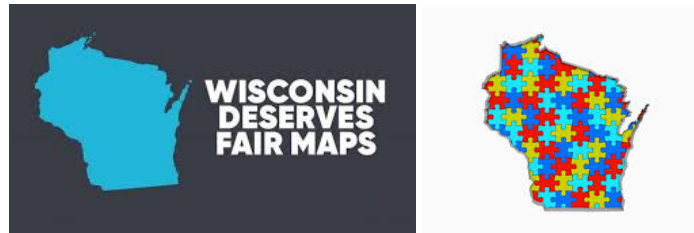
## In Case You Missed It



*Local Favorite Frank's Diner to Once Again Appear on  
"Diners, Drive-Ins and Drives"*



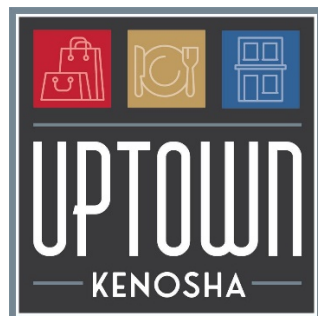
The Kenosha food scene will once again be in the national spotlight, as Frank's Diner is making a new appearance on the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives". Frank's was first featured on the popular show in 2007, when it operated under different ownership. Current owners Kevin Ervin and Julie Rittmiller are excited to show the entire country how much – and how little – has changed at this Kenosha institution. Check out the episode when it first airs tonight, Friday, August 20 at 8 pm, or look for one of their repeat airings on the Food Network.



## ***U.S. Census Bureau Releases Census Data, Starting the Clock on Next Redistricting***

After a delay caused by the Covid pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau has released the data collected from the 2020 Census. This is the information that states will use to conduct their legislative and Congressional redistricting. Shortly after release of the data, a lawsuit was filed to prevent the current districts from being used as a basis to redraw the new maps; that case will be heard by a panel of three federal judges, who will also decide whether to set a timeline for the Republican-controlled Legislature and Governor Evers to agree on new sets of maps. If an agreement isn't reached, as most people anticipate, the courts would then compile the new maps. Other lawsuits over the maps, including suits in state courts, are possible. The clock has started, but there is sure to be a lot of action in a short amount of time before new maps are put in place.

As you may know, I've joined with my Democratic colleagues in the State Legislature for many years now in working toward a nonpartisan redistricting commission, such as the one used in Iowa and some other states. This would take the politics out of redistricting and allow the voters to pick their representatives, not representatives to pick their voters. Republicans have consistently blocked such reform. Governor Evers used an Executive Order to create the Peoples' Maps Commission, a nonpartisan board comprised of members from across the state, tasked with drawing new sets of maps. The commission held a number of virtual public hearings over the last year to gather input and is working on completing their map proposals.



## ***Local Advocates and Community Organization to Hold “Days of Healing” in Kenosha***

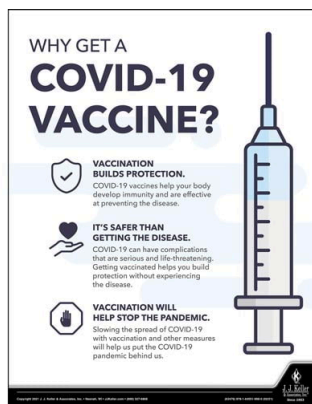
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Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: Sen. Wirch@legis.state.wi.us • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> • Fax: (608) 267-0984  
(262) 694-7379

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Uptown Kenosha, Inc., the ELCA Outreach Center, Building Our Future and other community organizations, along with corporate sponsors like Jockey, have joined together to host the Kenosha Uptown Days of Healing. This will begin on August 23 and culminate on August 25 with a neighborhood cleanup and movie night. There will also be bouncy houses, games, prizes and free food. You can find more details [here](#) and [here](#).



## ***CDC Recommends Booster Covid Vaccine After 8 Months of Vaccination; WI Currently Offering a Booster for those Immunocompromised***

Last week, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted unanimously to recommend an additional dose of the Covid-19 vaccine for individuals with specific medical conditions or who are receiving treatments that are associated with moderate to severe immune compromise. At this time, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) supports this recommendation. In addition, President Joe Biden announced this week that the CDC is also recommending that everyone get a vaccine "booster" eight months after completing their initial vaccination series, beginning in September. More information is available from the [CDC](#) and from [DHS](#).



## ***WEDC Offering "Main Street Bounceback" Grants to Local Businesses***

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has made available "Main Street Bounceback" grants to new or existing businesses and non-profit organizations moving into vacant properties in Wisconsin's downtowns and commercial corridors. The grant awards equal \$10,000 and can be used to pay leases or mortgages, operational expenses, and other business costs related to the newly opened location. Again, the program is open to **new or existing** businesses opening a new location or expanding operations in a vacant commercial space as of January 1, 2021. Applications opened on August 9, 2021, and run through June 30, 2022. Businesses and non-profits interested can learn more at [wedc.org/mainstreet-bounceback](http://wedc.org/mainstreet-bounceback).



## ***AG Josh Kaul Files Suit to Remove Natural Resources Board Chair Whose Term Has Expired, Refuses to Leave; Republican-Controlled Senate Has Left***

After months of turmoil and uproar, Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul has filed a lawsuit to remove Dr. Fred Prehn from the Natural Resources Board. Prehn, who was appointed by Republican Governor Scott Walker, has refused to vacate his seat as Board Chair for months, taking advantage of a loophole that has allowed him to maintain control over the state's environmental and conservation policies. Prehn's term expired May 1, 2021, and Governor Tony Evers has appointed a well-qualified nominee to fill the position. Sandra Naas, the appointee, has more than 30 years of experience in conservation and natural resources issues. A quirk in state law allows Prehn to continue serving until his successor is confirmed by the Senate. However, precedent dictates that the member with the expired term would step down and allow the appointee to fill the seat pending his or her confirmation; this has happened in all but two instances in the Board's history. A transition from Prehn to Naas would give Evers' appointees a majority on the Board, the likely reason that Prehn has declined to step aside and Senate Republicans have refused to act on the appointment of Naas. This is part of a broader pattern of political, partisan obstruction by Senate Republicans when it comes to appointments. There are currently 157 nominations that Governor Evers has made to various state agencies and boards that are awaiting a confirmation vote by the State Senate, some dating all the way back January 2019. These include such high-profile positions/appointees as Department of Transportation Secretary-Designee Craig Thompson and Department of Health Services Secretary-Designee Karen Timberlake. As the ranking member on the Senate Natural Resources Committee, my colleague, Senator Melissa Agard (D-Madison) and I sent letters to both Dr. Prehn, calling for him to step down, and Senate President Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield), asking him to refer the appointment of Sandra Naas to a committee to get the confirmation process started. You can read copies of those letters [here](#) and [here](#).





## ***WI Veterans' Secretary Mary Kolar says, "You are Not Alone" to Vets Experiencing Distress Following Afghanistan Withdrawal***

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, led by Sec. Mary Kolar, wants Wisconsin's veterans to know that there is help available if they are experiencing anxiety, rage, anguish or other emotional or mental health consequences due to the unfolding events in Afghanistan. These include programs at the federal, state and county levels. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- Veterans Crisis Line – If you are having thoughts of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255, then PRESS 1, or visit [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net).
- Per the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, you can get connected with mental health care, no matter your discharge status, service history, or eligibility for VA health care. If you need support for a specific mental health problem, or if you're having problems sleeping, controlling your anger, or readjusting to civilian life, you are not alone. To access free VA mental health services right away, call or walk into any [VA medical center](#), anytime, day or night, or call or walk into any [Vet Center](#) during clinic hours.
- Contact one of the WDVA's local veterans outreach and recovery coordinators. These individuals are trained to assist veterans who have mental health and other needs. Call 1-800-WIS-VETS or visit <https://dva.wi.gov/Pages/benefitsclaims/VORP.aspx>.
  - Find more [here](#).



## ***Program Helps Kenosha Homebuyers with Downpayment, Closing Costs***

A program funded by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration is available to assist eligible homebuyers in Kenosha (through the [Kenosha Housing Authority](#)) purchase affordable, single-family homes by providing downpayment and closing cost assistance in the form of a grant up to \$10,000. The HCRI Downpayment Grant is able to be issued, only once, to first-

time homebuyers who meet program guidelines and reside in Kenosha County. Households must be income eligible, with a gross income below 80% of Kenosha County median income (income eligibility chart available [here](#)). A few other conditions apply, as well, and can be found using the links above. For more information or an application, contact (by email or phone):

- Contact Person: Cyndi Zarletti-Lee
- Phone Number: (262)697-4641
- Email: [Cyndi.zarletti@kenoshacounty.org](mailto:Cyndi.zarletti@kenoshacounty.org)



## ***Homeowner Assistance Also Available to Racine Residents***

A program for City of Racine residents, through [Housing Resources, Inc.](#), can provide assistance to homeowners who are delinquent on their mortgage payments and who have experienced job loss or reduced income due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The City of Racine Mortgage Assistance Program is a grant funded using federal CARES Act money. Applications are being accepted now through December 17, 2021, unless the allocated funds run out before then. Depending on eligibility and date of income interruption, direct, one-time assistance on behalf of the homeowner(s) may be provided or up to six months in mortgage payments. Only missed mortgage payments taking place March 1, 2020, or after will be considered, and mortgage payments must be at least 30 days late. Additionally, the homeowner(s) must meet certain income guidelines, which can be found [here](#). Application decisions are made as soon as possible but no later than two weeks from receipt of the completed application. Similarly, grants are processed as quickly as possible but not more than 30 days from receipt of completed applications; payments are sent directly to the homeowners' mortgage company. You can find more information [here](#), and if you still have questions, call (262)222-6688.