

September 23, 2022



Dear friends,

Autumn is here. Not only was September 22 the first official day of the fall season, but the temperatures took a turn toward more fall-like weather, as well. There are so many things to love about fall – the beautiful colors of the changing leaves; football season; the end of daylight savings time; apple picking and apple cider; the approaching holiday season. It's the perfect time to get out and enjoy nature without working up a sweat. I hope you'll all take some time to enjoy autumn in Wisconsin.

Until next time, stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



Scoops in Kenosha Tries to Set New World Record

On October 1, Scoops Ice Cream & Candy will attempt to set a world record for the World's Largest Ice Cream Social. Owner Julie Soldenwagner is hoping to gather 1,000 people; as part of the event, the first thousand to show up will get a free dish of ice cream. Soldenwagner sees this a way to brighten up the city's image following several events in recent years. The event is scheduled for 1 pm on Saturday, October 1, and Soldenwagner believes the tricky part will be getting all of the guests stay in place until they can get them all in one picture. You'll find more information about Scoops [here](#).

In Case You Missed It



Evers Calls Special Session on Constitutional Amendment Allowing Public Challenge Laws Through State Referendums Would Be First Step Toward Statewide Referendum on Reproductive Rights

In a press conference on Wednesday, Governor Tony Evers announced that he was calling a Special Session of the State Legislature to take up a proposed constitutional amendment that would, for the first time, allow Wisconsin citizens to challenge state laws through statewide ballot initiatives.

Voters in more than twenty states, including Michigan, Illinois and Ohio, currently have the power to change state laws through the referendum process. The constitutional amendment that

Evers is proposing would allow voters to submit petitions to the Wisconsin Elections Commission to hold votes on adding or repealing laws. Under the plan, voter-circulated ballot measures would have different signature thresholds based on votes in the most recent race for Governor. To get a measure to repeal a state law on the ballot, organizers would need to collect signatures equal to 4% of the votes cast in the most recent Governor's race; if it were to happen today, that number would be about 106,000 signatures. For a ballot measure to pass a new law, signatures equaling 6% would be needed; that would be about 159,000 by the current standard.

A proposed constitutional amendment would need 8%, or about 212,000 signatures. If it were to be successful, the new ballot measure process could be used to challenge the state's 1849 criminal abortion ban. Republican leaders in the Legislature immediately shot down Evers's proposal.

During his time in office, Evers has called numerous Special Sessions of the Legislature, on topics such as Medicaid/BadgerCare expansion, gun safety, education funding, and reproductive rights. Each time, Republican leaders have "gaveled in" to begin the session before immediately "gaveling out" to end the session.



National Hispanic Heritage Month Kicks Off

Every year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 through October 15. This is a time to celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observance began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson. It was expanded in 1988 to cover a 30 day period starting on September 15 and ending October 15.

September 15 is a significant date, as it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Additionally, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and 18, respectively.



National Voter Registration Day Reminds Us to Make Sure our Registrations are Up to Date

Tuesday, September 20, was recognized nationwide as Voter Registration Day. With the fall general election just weeks away now, this is a great time to make sure you are registered with your current name at your current address and that you have requested an absentee ballot, if you plan to do so. You can both check your voter registration and request an absentee ballot through <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>.



New Bivalent Covid Boosters Now Available Locally

Residents of the Kenosha and Racine areas have a number of options when it comes to getting their next Covid booster, the so-called “bivalent” booster that works against both the original Covid strain and the current, more prevalent strains. There are also a few different ways you can find the vaccination site closest to you. You can visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/>; text your zip code to 438829; or call 211. Many people are opting to get their annual flu vaccination at the same time; this might not be available at all locations, so make sure you check before you go.



Kenosha Sculpture Walk Introduces Some New Additions

The Kenosha Community Foundation Arts Fund 2022-24 Sculpture Walk is set to include 10 new additions. These include a 14 foot sculpture named “Dragonfly” and the eight-foot “Sphere”. Local artist Bruce Niemi has two pieces featured amongst the new additions. The new installation was previously postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Sculpture Walk Project Manager Natalie Strohm says that the new installation features something for everyone’s tastes.



September is National Recovery Month

More than 20 million Americans are in recovery from substance use disorder. These are mothers and fathers; brothers and sisters; friends, neighbors and co-workers. In support and celebration of the road to recovery, September has been designated National Recovery Month.

Recovery Month 2022 has adopted the theme “Every Person. Every Family. Every Community.” The observance will work to promote and support new treatment and recovery practices; the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community; and the dedication of service providers and community members across the country who make recovery in all forms possible.



Several Locally-Made Products in the Running to be Named “Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin”

One-hundred products have been named finalists in the “Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin” contest, with several local companies among the contenders. Local nominees include Cree Lighting Cadiant Dynamic Skylight by Cree Lighting in Racine; NASCAR Body by Five Star Fabricating in Twin Lakes; Plant Based Queso Style Dip by Good Foods of Pleasant Prairie; and SoFresh Food Waste Solutions by Kenosha’s SoFresh, Inc.

The first round of voting began on September 19 and runs through September 27. The 16 nominees with the most votes in the first round will move on to “Manufacturing Madness”, a bracket-style tournament that features head to head matchups of the top Wisconsin-made products. The winner will be announced on October 19. More details on the contest, including how to vote, can be found at www.madeinwis.com.



SENATE SCHOLARS WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

“Senate Scholars” Program Seeking Applicants

The Wisconsin State Senate’s Senate Scholars Program is currently seeking applicants for the 2023 sessions. The Senate Scholars Program is open to all Wisconsin high school juniors and seniors aged 16-18. The program is an intensive, week-long educational program offered by the Wisconsin State Senate. Admission is highly competitive and is limited to thirty-three academically exceptional high school juniors and seniors from across Wisconsin, one from each State Senate district. Each Senate Scholar receives a hands-on, up-close view of the Legislature’s role in our democracy. Senate Scholars gain experience in such diverse areas as policy development, constituent relations, and processing legislation by working with Senators, legislative staff, and the University of Wisconsin faculty. The fee for attending the program is \$250; this includes the cost of lodging and all meals. Applications are due by November 15, and applicants will be notified of admissions status by December 15, 2022. Participants will be able to choose from one of three week-long sessions: January 22-27; February 12-17; March 12-17. You can find the application, and more information, [here](#).



Wisconsin Launches Program to Send Out Free Covid Tests

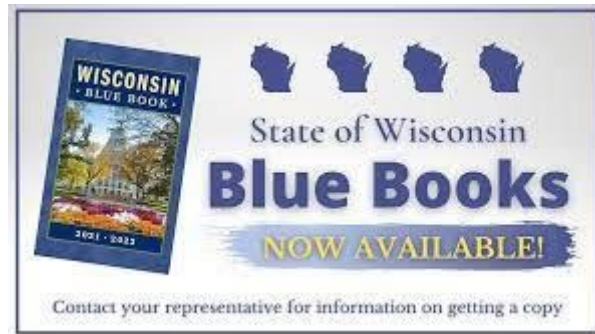
Wisconsin residents can now get Covid-19 tests sent to them free of charge from the state. The federal government had been offering free Covid tests, but the funding for that program has run out.

The Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services (DHS) says that the [Say Yes! Covid Test website](#) is now live and operational. The site allows households to order five rapid tests for free. Households can still get up to eight rapid Covid tests per month through their insurance providers, as well.



Take My 2022 Legislative Survey

It's very important to me as a legislator to hear what you think about the important issues of the day. I've put together a survey on a variety of topics that I am hoping you will take the time to complete. You can find an online version of the survey at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/22/wirch/surveys-and-petitions/2022-legislative-survey>.



Reserve Your Copy of the 2021-2023 State of Wisconsin Blue Book

The latest edition of the State of Wisconsin Blue Book has arrived. If you would like to have a copy sent to you, contact my office at (608)267-8979 or sen.wirch@legis.wisconsin.gov. These books are free and contain interesting and valuable information about our state's culture, history and government.